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100
POEMS

To Theo
after 25 years

100 POEMS

by

Edward Thompson

1944

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PREFACE

BETWEEN the first half-dozen pieces in this book, the work of a boy of seventeen, and the latest lie some forty years. Arrangement is roughly chronological, except that the poem printed last of all, *Harbour Music*, is not recent.

The two or three 'Conrad' poems perhaps need a word of explanation. Oriental poets in their own name or an assumed name often add their personal comment on what they have written. For example, after Radha, Krishna's mistress, has rhapsodized about her lord, the poet, onlooker to the passion he has expressed, will give a verdict, sometimes of the naïvest and most obvious sort, yet by its simplicity effective, as 'Chandidas says: Maiden, love has pierced thee to the heart'. Or this statement may take the form of a précis of what has gone before, or a corollary. In the Persian mystics, it is often a distillation of the sense of what has been diffusely shown. The method seems fitted, in its impersonal standing apart from personality (your own mood regarded as already a detached and shredded thing, open to impartial judgement), to cloak thoughts or suffering one would not care to expose. 'Conrad of Elsass' is a character in my very early play, *The Enchanted Lady*; the name had served me in occasional journalism.

There seems nothing else to add, except thanks to my wife and younger son for criticism and help in selection, and to my friend Mr. H. M. Margoliouth, of Oriel College—and acknowledgements to Messrs. Macmillan, who have generously allowed me to take eighty pieces from books they publish, and to Messrs. Secker & Warburg, for leave to use seven poems from *New Recessional*. Twelve pieces are now collected for the first time.

E. T.

OXFORD,
October, 1943

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THE KNIGHT MYSTIC

THEN in the silence where I stood
I saw the grove was dark about;
The married monarchs of the wood
With sombre umbrage quite shut out

All light of sun, all glimpse of moon,
Or stars that nightly fill the sky,
In the mid blaze of fieriest noon
Exclusive of the sun's hot eye.

Yet in that darkness, heavy, close,
God knows I did not cry for light;
Alone and silent there, God knows,
I wished not human sound or sight.

Nowise the unknown, the unseen I feared;
Darkling, I did not think to pray;
So near was God, that speech appeared
Vain trustless blasphemy that day.

Nearer than flesh or frame He stood,
Stirring by life and soul and brain
The languid pulses of my blood
To earlier ecstasies again.

Kneeling in spirit, but in limb
Steadfast, unquivering, unafraid,
With unveiled eyes I stood by Him,
Pavilioned with obsequious shade.

One was I with that Living Light
Whereof all stars and spirits be,
Whose tabernacle is cloud and night,
Whose ways are firmament and sea.

Then from that height I wandered down,
And sought the common steps of men ;
With hamlet and imperial town
My thoughts grew conversant again.

But folk, that marked my mien and eyes
Unlike the man's they knew so well,
Questioned me, and in earnest wise
I opened all I had to tell.

'I have walked and talked with God indeed,
Nearer than any saint, and I,
Though known a weak and worthless reed,
(Marvel of marvels !) did not die !'

'Thou hast walked with God ? How looked He then ?'
With passionate eager speech they cried.
'And thou hast talked with Him ?' Again :—
'What message bring'st thou from His side ?'

But I—as from the inrushing sea
The lava oft recedes a space,
To gain an awful mastery
And shatter all the mountain's base—

So, in this flood I could not stem
Of curious questionings, dumb I stood ;
Then after fain had opened on them
The flood-gates of an angrier mood.

But something on the scornful thought
Put rein, till gentler speech held flow :—
'Of visible lineament saw I naught,
Nor what, if aught, He spake I know.'

And, though they pressed for definite word,
I knew not, and I could not say.
And though they scoffed 'Lo ! one who heard
Yet bears no echo of speech away !'

I heeded not. 'I dreamt, no more !'
Maybe. I only know I gained
Somehow a strength not mine before,
Though since invincible maintained.

A SOUTHERN GARDEN

ARIBUTUS and myrtle grow
Round about the flowering closes,
Paved with petals white as snow
Dropped from the embowering roses.
Ilex and acanthus there
Front the lurking winds that fare,
Warm and winged, above the beds
Whereon the oleander sheds
Blood-red blossoms, falling lightly.
Here is pleasant noise of rain,
Here the Sun-god's shafts gleam brightly,
And 'neath mellow moons that wane,
Wax, and wane, and wax again,
Scent of rose and tuberose,
Gillyflower and lilyflower,
Blows against the patient face
Of the god who guards the place,
Carven Hermes, where he stands,
Fleet of feet, and strong of hands,
Pleased, though not in Arcady,
In this rival heaven to be.

THE EDEN

FAIR river rushing to the sea!
 Whose waters green are bordered thus
 By woods renowned in venerie
 And islands set with mimulus !

Whose laughing billows leap and glide
 By sleepy Appleby to where
 Thy sister Eamont brings her tide
 From out knoll-bordered Ullswatèr !

Surely, fair stream, thou art the queen
 Of sliding rivulets crystal-clear,
 Whatever currents cool and green
 The wise of other realms revere !

The tribute of a thousand hills,
 That buttress up the heavens, is thine ;
 Thine the unnumbered tumbling rills
 From Hèlvellyn to huge Pennine.

The raven over thee, from gaunt
 Crossfell, flies, far aloft desried ;
 The peewit and the heron haunt
 The meadows at thy willowy side.

Campanula and tansy tall
 Bloom where, in shade of hedgerows cool,
 The luckless urchin meets withal
 His sportive namesake, fresh from school.

By many a bridge with fronded walls,
 Where rue and brittle spleenwort grow,
 The otter, as the twilight falls,
 Whistles and dives for prey below.

And where the sward is smooth and green,
With sentinel rushes set about,
Pavilions of the fairy queen
Are pitched for revel when light goes out.

PASTORAL

LONE in meadows where the wind
Plays along the whistling green,
Corydon and Ancar bind
Wisps of hay, with laughing mien.

Seated at their side, behold,
Rapt with unbelieving smile,
One fat bunny, brown and bold,
Hearkens with Ancaria while

Corydon the tale relates
Of the men of other days,
Strivers with untoward fates,
Rough and stern in all their ways,

Savage tribes, and Thracian folks
Who the gods held not in awe.—
Bunny looks most wise and strokes
Furry stomach with one paw.



Now the fields are shorn and bare,
As a paven palace-floor
Smooth; and only here and there,
Where the grasses wave no more,

Hillocks, tangled, warm and green,
Stand across the pleasant lea
(Greener isles were never seen
Upon any summer sea).

Corydon upon the expanse
Looks with anxious eyes about;
Then, with wily countenance,
Brings another story out.

Tells of Proserpina's woes,
But, before the story's done,
Brings with action to its close
Tale that was with words begun.

Bunny laughs outright and stares;
Dropped are ropes and dropped is hay;
And another Pluto bears
His Proserpina away.

5

THE GRAVE BY THE RIVER

WITH pain he reached the water-side;
He crawled upon the turf and died;
And till a long day's force was done
He lay exposed to breeze and sun.

His lips were foul with ooze and dredge;
His locks were braided black with sedge,
Which twined with tresses not his own
That forehead, cold as Parian stone.

But with the falling of the dew
And night's slow conquest in the blue
The kindly spirits that ride the air
Received into their pious care,

Bidding the winds together bring
The wrecks of many a bygone spring,
And, whilst they gathered leaf and stem,
Proclaim the stranger's requiem.

And Nature, that had given a grave,
Did also from corruption save,
That still, 'neath piled-up leaves and loam,
He sleeps within his quiet home.

And here, oblivious of the damp,
The glow-worm lights her evening lamp,
And voice to voice, across the swell,
The nightingales sing loud and well.

And aye his body from repose
Stiffens, and stark and rigid grows,
At those two hours when, east and west,
God's presence is most manifest.

For when the dawn breaks up the night
And heaven's highways with torch doth light,
And when the gathering sunset thrills
The waiting silence of the hills,

His conscious hands are clasped in prayer,
And, wholly purged from taint of care,
His glowing face, beneath the sod,
Turns, like a sunflower, to his God.

Now, she that is of heaven the shepherdess
 And casts sinister influence on the seas,
 Who rules the Plough, the Bear, the Pleiades,
 All stars with their conjunctions, great and less ;
 Whose sway the gathered clouds of Jove confess,
 When drawn together by the Hyades,
 (Those rainy Kids that empty to the lees
 Heaven's cisterns high, when grapes are in the press
 And jolly Autumn reels with vintage home),—
 I saw her mounted in the Night's cool dome,
 'Mid stretching clouds of more than marble whiteness.
 A circling nimbus clung like yellow hair
 About that face of sun-surpassing brightness,
 And underneath the sleeping Earth lay fair.

HE martyred at the self-same stake
 Both Faith and Love for Truth's sweet sake,
 And as some cone, though capped with snow,
 Bowelled with writhing fires below,
 Beneath a wan cold face he bore
 A nature tortured to its core.
 The passions which beset his soul
 Brake never through the fierce control
 Which shewed a part, but masked the whole.
 Hope in a captive leash he held,
 And Fear's rebellions sternly quelled,
 Until to outward view at length
 He stood in self-sufficient strength,
 Who in his chambered being's hold
 As paramount denizen controlled
 The traitors who were fierce of old.

Yet, as a thousand thoughts begin
Their stifled parliament within,
When the mild night's maternal sway
Emancipates, and tears away
The stern proscription of the day,
First awed and hushed, then gathering tone,
Till to a fierce insistence grown,
So whispers grim at times would fall
On the stark silence of that hall,
Whispers, God knows, of tortured hosts,
Some living still, some long since ghosts,
Whispers which rose to scream and shout
Flat blasphemy and treason out.
Till that rebellious babel filled
Each corner of the courts it thrilled,
While brushing Shapes, that bore no form,
Would from forgotten crannies swarm,
A hideous rout, with mocking cry
And laughter as they rustled by,
Shapes greatly daring, bold to peer
Into the face now chilled with fear,
Whose touch, though lifted as it pressed,
Seared like white iron the shrinking breast,
And like a biting tremor passed
Through the poor soul that cowered aghast.

O, had ye only seen him then,
Seen as he was this man of men,
Beleaguered, every egress locked,
A raving captive, caged and mocked,
Though Lord of Walls, within them known
A tyrant foiled and overthrown,
Ye would have cast no word of hate
At those proud lips, that upright gait,
Nor dared to front with hostile brow
Those masking eyes, whose silent glow

Lay like some tarn, whose darkened breast
Is cover to a vast unrest,
Seeming to say nor less to hide
All is not well beneath its tide,
From whose far depths, with tossing surge,
A tortured spirit might emerge.
O had ye known him thus, and seen
What lurked behind that iron mien,
With little heart for hate and ire,
Only with pity set afire,
Ye would have cast this brother's care
At the great Mother's knees in prayer,
Beseeching, for her woman's part,
Our Lady of the Stricken Heart
On these worn lids her peace to impress,
Oblivion of the old distress,
The sleep-in-life from which the soul
Wakes like a child, renewed and whole,
Or to seal up that shuddering breath
With God's great second gift of death.

EACH cornered stone, each thorn shall sting
Thy tortured feet to bleed afresh.
To every jagged point shall cling
Some morsel of thy flesh.

In torment of thy hottest noon
The taciturn unfeeling sky
Shall beat thy limbs to flag and swoon,
And bring thee near to die.

No rock, no bush shall bless thy sight
With lure of shelter for awhile
From flaunting glare of ghastly light
That paints each hideous mile.

And, when the way behind is cast
And thou canst well the gates perceive,
Requital of thy laboured past,
Red in thy latest eve,

The bliss for which thou didst forswear
Thy once much-cherished vanity,
For all thy sacrifice and care
Perchance is not for thee.

The veriest phantom of a town
May dance before thy cheated gaze,
Or thou at last mayst wander down
Into forbidden ways.

I KNEW Him late? Not so! Our feet have trod
 One path since Time began;
 Ages ere I was man
 This comradeship was known.
 And for the love which lives betwixt us twain,
 Whose long fulfilment fell to Time alone,
 (Since none could of a thing so old and great
 The far beginning give or any date
 To that which knew nor birth nor travail-pain)
 It waxed, but did not wane,
 Nor shed its leaves, as human loves which grow
 Deciduous, stripped before each whirling snow,
 But in deep splendour ran
 This root whereof I hold the blossomed rod
 Far back into the purposes of God.

I KNOW whose fingers fell with light caress,
 I know whose whispered word
 My sinking spirit stirred
 And soothed this dull distress.
 How can I help but know Him, since He lies
 In every path apparent to my eyes,
 Unmasked by every lifting wind, and known
 By shadow with each shaft of sunlight thrown,
 Revealed with every breeze
 That draws apart the green skirts of the trees?
 It were less strange should I move unaware
 Of this firm sod, this circumambient air,
 Than if I knew Him not whose way must lie
 Beside my own for all eternity.

II **T**HREE is a spot, dim-seen behind our trees,
Where for a space, ere sunny hours are told,
Whoever goes goes garmented in gold ;
And I, to take my ease,
Oft-times, my book flung idly on my knees,
That transitory company behold,
Yea, much have mused and marvelled as they went
In sun-brave pilgrimage magnificent.
By largesse of that generous ample air
Enwrapped with light beyond an angel's dream
The beggar moves ; nor king, if king were there,
More glorious than his meanest hind would gleam.
No eyes but mine behold this daily show,
The folk, the clinging glow,
The ruddy stems of that majestic road.
I watch my fellows go,
Priest, labourer, child, the coolie with his load,
All, man or woman, playing lad or maid,
In one obliterating pomp arrayed.

RED berries on the banyan !
And in the pipal-tree
The sickle of a silver moon
Most beautiful to see !

Red berries on the holly !
And in the apple-leaves
A waxen gleam of mistletoe,
A rustling stir, a silver glow,
White beard and sickle's glint which show
A Druid ghost of long ago
That gathers in his sheaves !

• **H**ERE, in my quiet toil apart,
My verse remembers still
The passions of my former heart,
My fierce tempestuous will.
I put my ragged duster by,
I lay the worn chalk down,
I do not hear the jackal's cry,
The tomtoms of the town.
The perished years long shadows cast,
And on my spirit's wall
Rich hues by music's power amassed
And eager figures fall.
Then, in the tranquil words I write
A wind of memory makes
Such stir as in our Indian night
May ruffle sleeping lakes.
So in their moat at Mandalay
The lotus-blossoms dream
Of queens and emperors far away
And Time's fast-running stream.
Dark fires along the castled banks
Beneath the wan moon burn;
With pomp of drum and marshalled ranks
The exiled years return.
From Irawadi's depths the ghosts
Of buried glories glide,
And o'er the drowsing plain long hosts
Of vanished warriors stride,
Till even through Amarapura blows
A stirring breath, where sit
The Buddhas in eternal doze
While bat-winged centuries flit.

THE CRICKET-PITCH

To choose a pitch we walk.
T How beautiful beneath the drowsy skies
 Of falling eve the quiet landscape lies,
 And in this gracious air
 The white roofs of the Lepers' Home how fair!
 I gaze, we talk.
 What say'st thou, friend? Mine eyes
 Unearthly glory fills, nor is there found
 Within mine ears a way for human sound.
 Some unseen power has touched all things, and now
 All ghost am I, and thou.
 This mortal scene dissolves, nor can I see
 If comrades still we tread eternity,
 But in what meadows dim with light I stride
 I marvel, and whose voice is at my side.

THE LEPERS' HYMN

I HEARD the lepers singing as I went
 Towards the jungle; gleamed ahead the line
 Sharp-green of sal-trees; silent earth gave sign
 Of rain to fall; no less my soul, long dry,
 Catching from lips of pain that thankful cry,
 Grew' ware of showers and, rapt to nobler mood,
 To graver musings turned and thoughts which blent,
 Diverse, to one consent
 (For who, so blest, would dare division make
 Of lesser from the greater gratitude?)
 As thus: the Word
 Became flesh; and this eve the drought will break
 In torrents; rice to-morrow will be springing;
 And God to-day has heard
 The lepers singing.

HERE in this light we met; and, though the street
Is trodden daily by ten thousand feet,
This score of years no other folk I see,
But still the road is walked by only Thee.

17

THE sun drops low, the moon, hung face-to-face,
Waits for her hour; a whispering sudden gust
Dances amid the dust,
And stirs the trees from calm,
Bursting upon their silence like the psalm
Which from a saint's long meditation leaps,
Crowning with foam of praise his spirit's deeps.
It sinks, and in their spreading tops again
Quiet her kingdom keeps,
While sunset tints their trunks with ruddy grain.
Men seek their homes, the noise of day dies
down;
Still Heaven expects the grace
Which on her aching brows Rest's golden crown
Will set, a peace from pain,
And gentler radiance through all paths will shed
Of light which lives not till all light is dead.

Conrad of Elsass says: O Soul, of Him
Thou dream'st who shines when other lights are dim!

THIS brief day will pass, surely pass,
 And many at the Name
 Of Him I worship cast reproach and blame.
 Yea, men will say, ‘Alas !
 This man, so poor, so broken, at the end
 Was lost, for all he boasted God his friend.
 Admit him weak, a fool beyond belief,
 A child for silly pride,
 And bowed with childish fears and childish grief:
 But yet he loved; and in his strength he tried.
 Ah, could not He
 That raised the dead and made the blind to see
 Have caused it that His servant had not died?’

So men will speak, and so
 Will through their homes a wind of question blow,
 And clamour of tongues awake
 Along Earth’s ways, an hour, ere friends forget
 That Conrad’s sun has set.
 But Thou, that little heed
 Of men’s wild words and wilder thoughts dost take,
 Behold Thy servants jealous for Thy sake !
 And, lo, how love dare duty’s bounds exceed !
 Yea, Conrad asks, grown bold :
 What thing is this, hereafter to be told,
 That Thou, a King, dost unto service call,
 Yet leave Thy sons amid dark ways to perish,
 Unhelped to stray and fall,
 For all Thy Name that in their death they cherish ?

THIS sword of verse I bear within my hand
The years have fashioned ; thus, and thus, I bade ;
But they, for higher mandate that they had,
With patient eyes elsewhere to my command
Not hearkened, neither wrought it as I planned
But damascened with shining joys and clad
The hilt with gems that make the gazer glad,
And plunged in hissing griefs the bitter brand.

Yet men, that dream not of the heats which made,
Chide the sure poise and beauty of the blade,
Till cold its master seems and wrapt apart.
The brightness blinds.—To you this truth appears :
No warrior wields it, but a child, whose heart
Is weak and troubled oft with causeless tears.

THE TALE OF DEATH

(January-July, 1916)

FROM Orah, Felahiye,
Sannaiyat, Hanna, Sinn,
Dujaleh, Nasiriye,
The tale of death came in.

Death, where the soldier stands
Burnt in an eight-foot trench;
Death, in the blinding sands;
Death, in the desert's stench;
Death, where the reedbeds' mesh
Traps, and the Arabs prowl;
Death, in the fly-blown flesh
And the water scant and foul;
Death, where the flarelights fall,
An hour ere dawn's faint flush,
And we jump the garden wall
(Six hundred yards to rush);
Death, where the P-boats go
Packed with their huddled pain;
Death, where the strong tides flow
By Busra to the main;
Death, where the wind's hot breath
Fails, and the fierce seas burn;
Death, in the docks; and death,
Where the stretchers wait their turn.

From Nasiriye and Sinn
The tale came in;
And the shark-tracked ships went down
To Bombay town.

THE unhasting stream, unruffled deep and placid ;
The long mud walls, the mirrored groves of date ;
Clamour of frogs and crickets ; in the sky
The marshfowl's cry ;
When lo ! the dusk is stirred ;
White sail aloft, and like a giant bird,
Moving along the river's glassy face
A boat glides in, dim with mysterious state,
Fades down the night ; and all
Is as the years had fled and left no trace
Since days of thine, Harun-ar-Rasid !

THE pastures of Sannaiyat
Are flanked with grass and reeds ;
The pastures of Sannaiyat,
Where now the plover feeds.
Black partridge saunters slowly
Along the thorn-cracked walls
And sand-grouse unto sand-grouse
Across the river calls.

The pastures of Sannaiyat
Lie broad 'twixt stream and sedge ;
The marsh's silver mirrors
God gave the land for hedge.
'Twixt tamarisk and papyrus
A tongue of sand He thrust,
Where jerboas build their burrows
And scurry through the dust.

And Tigris, racing seaward,
Remembers here a space
The storm of human anguish
That swept the desert's face.
The flocks are grey hyenas,
And here the jackal feeds—
On the pastures of Sannaiyat,
Sannaiyat flanked with reeds.

WHEN I remember all the ways I went
 Companioned as was never man before
 Companioned, even so the heart grows sore
 With too much pain of musing, memories blent
 Of joy and sorrow, thoughts of bruise and fall
 And petty wrongs that wake to tyrannize
 The man that lives their thrall,
 For all his friendly skies.

Ah, Lord, at last to think on other things !
 The woods, with trembling wings
 Aflutter, and with glimmer of golden light
 Most glowing and with emerald leafage bright !
 The flower-sown darkened ways with bean and clove
 Rich-scented ! Dusk that sought her poet-lover,
 With rustling step and breath of clustered roses !
 And, dim to maple-closes,
 The owls slow-flitting from the roads, the skelter
 Of fury lives to shelter !
 Dear Wind, my friend, the o'erclambered bushes shake
 And flood the wearied brain
 With breath of rose and honeysuckle again !
 Dear Wind, my friend, awake,
 That Night may come, tall Night, my Mother
 bringing
 A sound of nightingales and rivers singing,
 Of woodlands murmuring and of blossoms swaying,
 Of homing wings, of little children praying,
 Of life and wandering tides that seek the deep ;
 That Night may come, and after Night come Sleep !

Before Kut, 1916.

THEY love is a meadow-rose,
Which clings to the earth, and grows
Away from the wind, with blossoms whose opened face
Of wonder and innocent grace
Meets children, marvelling on their joyous ways
Where the crimson lamps of the poppy blaze
In the southward-streaming wind, and the purple light
Of the orchis-torches makes the tall grass bright.

The rose by its scent is known,
Its golden heart and ivory petals spreading,
Globes of light in the branches thickly sown,
And a sward for the elves' gay treading.
Lover of Souls, Thy place is
In the wind-swept grass-grown desolate spaces,
Where the air blows sweet
And cool to the brows of Thy roaming child,
And a path worn smooth by the punctual feet
Of Thy ministering friends leads over the wild.

Upper Tigris, August, 1916.

¹*Rosa Arvensis*, the Field Rose.

IN the green valleys
Where never wind blows,
Light of days forgotten
Lives at daylight's close.

Springs I once rejoiced in
All their sweets disclose ;
Pomegranate-blossom,
Mayflower, and rose;

Summer's belts of heather,
Slopes of bramble-rose ;
Autumn's every fruit-tree
There in thickets grows.

Down the green lawns
And by the stream grows
All of fruit and flower
That Memory knows.

Folded far, and hidden,
Whose way no man knows,
Deep lies the valley
Beyond its girdling snows.

Here is only winter,
Chill, with early snows ;
The Tree of Life stripped,
With death in its repose.

Yet dreams perchance may wander,
In the tired mind's repose,
Down the green valleys
Where never wind blows.

O UR seven days' guest, he came and went his ways.
Walking the darkness garlanded with praise.
Our seven days' guest ! Yet love that this man gained
Others have scarce in three-score years attained.

NIGHT fell, and slowly o'er the blood-bought mile
They brought a broken body, frail but brave;
A boy who carried into death the smile
With which he thanked for water that we gave.
Steadfast among the steadfast, those who kept
The narrow flank whereby the Leicesters swept,
Amid the mounded sands of ancient pride
He sleeps where Grattan fell and Adams died.

THE man that has withdrawn a space
 To tremulous ways of peace,
 And seen that Leader face to face
 Whose looks are Light's increase,
 Cleansed from all guilt, he sings, and knows
 For him all paths run right;
 Shrived and erect, his spirit goes
 Nakedly back to fight.

Now him nor hopes nor fears can fret,
 Nor any griefs can hold,
 Howe'er his heart remember yet
 Loves that have been of old;
 For him all works and strifes are o'er,
 And, while the calm hours run,
 He waits, as for the tide the shore,
 And as night for the sun.

THE RIVER-FRONT, KUT

THE mud-strips green with lettuce, red with stacks
 Of liquorice; shattered walls and gaping caves;
 Beyond, the shifting sands and jackal's tracks;
 The dirging wind, the wilderness of graves.

RED Autumn on the banks,
RWhere, through fields that bear no grain,
 A desolate Mother treads
 By the brimming river, torn with rain !
 A chill wind moves in the faded ranks
 Of the rushes, rumpling their russet heads.
 And out of the mist, on the racing stream
 As I drift, I know that there gathers fast,
 Over the lands I shall see no more,
 Another mist, which with life shall last,
 Till all that I watched and my comrades bore
 Will be autumn mist, in an old man's dream.

THOUGH in the front of folk I call Thee Lord,
TAnd such high titles use
 As men to glorify their great ones choose,
 Yet in the silence of my heart is word
 Far other ; facing Thee in darkness, I
 'Dear Comrade,' and again, 'Dear Comrade' cry.

NIGH south from Jaffa, leaving the gray beach
 And glinting sea, strike in, until you reach
 A plain, whose wide arms, seized of wheat and oil,
 With flowers and foison crown a bounteous soil,
 A plain that, warm with fostering airs that bless,
 Sleeps in the lap of its own loveliness.

Yet pause not here; though Heaven and Earth may
 sing

Congratulation, and Eternal Spring
 After her lilies sow incessant flowers,
 And temper with sea-winds the hotter hours,
 Yet there's a spot my thoughts prefer to trace,
 So long as Memory keeps her sovran place.
 Behind the fields a rifted narrow pass
 Leads in, and shouldering mountains heave and mass,
 Whose highest fell still carries scar and sign
 Of one fierce hour, however bramble-vine
 Sprawl on the stones, and wild-rose over rocks,
 Confusedly heaped, trail a loose arm, and stocks
 Of live-oak bristle with armèd emerald leaves.
 Starved hawthorns thrust up soiled and ragged
 sleeves

From ground that seems of Nature's coarsest plinth
 Compact, one drab mosaic; terebinth
 (Dwarf, to be sure; nought comes to stature here,
 Where briar and hawthorn flower in fifty year)
 Crops out in spots; and scattered fig-trees stand;
 And there's an oliveyard on your left hand,
 As up the slope you climb, at top to find
 The line of stones the Londons crouched behind.
 We had machine-guns here; see, still the ground
 With empty cartridges and round on round
 Of unused ammunition strewn! Hard by,
 Tins, belts, a shirt, and rotting helmets lie.

The hill-foot has its graves. But of that strife
The tale is dead, and here insurgent Life,
In briar and brave green ilex lifting, fain
Would of that wrath rub out the hateful stain,
And, for the sterile hour that slew and hurt,
Would, as she may, her ancient place assert.
Yet these loose stones, hurriedly flung together,
Shall witness, through the storms of fiercest weather,
Of what a storm once swept an earlier day
And tossed men's lives like withered leaves away.
Lo, as, by tracing trench and mound, we tell
Ere history dawned where warriors fought and fell,
And know, by ditch and tower and builded ramp,
Where once the Legion kept their busy camp,
So here, if any follow after, bearing
Like blood with us or for our story caring,
Though centuries hence, they of our day shall read,
Scratched on the hill's hard brow, our graven screed:
Here how we lay, one bitter dusk of winter,
When bullets glanced and bit the rocks, and splinter
And nosecap sang, and all the air was torn
With iron, and shattered stone, and twisted thorn;
Here how we lay, and ducked, and watched the foe,
And kept the height.

They, seeing this, shall know.

(*The Jaffa Aujeh—‘Waters of Raqqon’ of the Old Testament—was crossed by the 52nd Scots Lowland Division on the night of December 20, 1917.*)

MIDNIGHT ! a dark slow water, deep and chilly !
(Still by our dead the trench-scarred slope we hold.)

Waters of Raqqon, let your water-lily
In valour’s praise its yellow buds unfold !
Let gladiolus its red banners flaunt,
And light of flowers o’erflood your purfled shores !
(Around those graves what deathless memories haunt—
Midnight and wading men and muffled oars !)

Make of their graves a garden, lest they mourn
For lowland heaths and fields of sunlit corn !
Ay me ! Not all your meadows shall atone,
Waters of Raqqon, for the meadows known !

ALONG the road, round rock and boulder spring
Blue crocuses and white,
Great hosts of white, knit in fantastic ring,
Like elves that dance about some giant-King
Who lies with dreamless head,
Drowsing, and all but dead,
Chained by enchantment through the Ages’ flight.
Down the cliff-walls, where cling
Bright moss and ragged scrub,
Cool waters slip and flow.

This is the way the Anzac horsemen swept;
And this the way where came
The Turks, those few, like singed fierce beasts from
flame,
Who from the slaughter by Abana leapt,
Seeking the mountain-track
To Syria's Hollow Vale,
With that pursuing dread
Hot-breathing at their back.
Dead ponies sprawl, on each five yards or so;
Their ribs our lorries crush,
And pound their shattered skulls into the slush.

Whipped out of life, with sob and straining limb,
With bursting heart, with bloodshot eyes and dim,
Lame maddened starved, they died.
See, here one tried
To struggle on, but fell; another made
Some few yards more, to frantic shout and drub;
This third essayed
The stony slope, but dropped, a quivering corse,
Lashed in death's tremors, lashed, with curses hoarse.
So their poor lives like grain
Were flung in handfuls, so they might avail
For one more hour of flight and frenzied strain,
One hour's escape from that relentless woe,
And swift obliterating restless foe.

SKULL AND STREAM

BEYOND Damascus, where the air blew chill,
 Snow-boding, and the whistling wintry flaw
 Round rock and crevice rang, a skull I saw
 Facing the plain, chance-tumbled in a rill.
 The sparkling water checked and curved, to fill
 The shell where Reason once gave Passion law,
 Then, under broken arch and fleshless jaw,
 Danced out, to slip and glitter down the hill.

This white far-gleaming dome was late a brow,
 In decent semblance clad—a plaything now
 For wind and stream ! For laughter of human lips
 In the naked fangs is ripple of water's speech,
 While the One Life strives here, in life's eclipse,
 Its old unheeded patient will to teach.

TO W. G. RUSHBROOKE

SUCH greeting as our country Muses know
 Be yours, old friend ! Sannin's high bank of snow
 Looks on me, on this boulder as I lie
 And let the golden afternoon drift by.
 Close muffling holm-oak, bryony's evergreen
 Binding a budded ash, make here a screen ;
 The blunt-nosed bee swings past on my retreat,
 Searching the ilex vainly for hid sweet ;
 Tall crimson windflowers lift through butcher's
 broom ;
 Brumana's pines across the valley loom,
 Black groves and thrusting ridge where Flecker came.
 Now pales Sannin's white brow ; a setting flame,
 The sun hangs low, on Homer's wine-dark sea.
 Soon over Lebanon will wander free

Our Huntress-Moon, soon Hesper shine, who home
Gathers the straying thoughts of men who roam.
My thoughts, that these nine years no paths have
known

Save alien, till themselves half-alien grown,
Turn back—perchance, in Faunus' hands this sprig
Of late-flowered broom is made a dowsing-twig
That brings remembrance' hidden springs to light.
So thought of you shines in my west this night,
And, as I turn within, to where the glow
Leaps out, from knotted pines, these rhymes I throw
For crackling salt on where that other fire
Broods, deep withdrawn, and with clasped hands
desire

Whatso Penates wait on Friendship's hearth
To bless your ways, in forum, field, and garth.
See, ere I go, far down the shadowed steep
I gaze, and think, beyond that twilit deep,
How Rushbrooke dwells, and for your sake invoke
Our kindly Gods of broom and shining oak.
Me, since no trespasser, if these accept
As their true worshipper, who aye has kept
With vows and tears their garlands fresh, my prayer
Not idly forth into the night will fare.

Aleih, Syria, March, 1919.

HALF-LIGHTS

Now on this shadowed mood
 What message falls?
 As one who hears in a wood
 Echo of vanishing calls,
 Surely I caught through stir
 Of the minutes' tick low cries?
 Caught through the candle's blur
 Light of remembered eyes?

I am listening, would ye speak!
 Ah, if your love were here,
 He would be strong, now weak!
 The vision dimmed would clear!
 Ruined and foiled though left,
 I should repel Death's scorn!
 More than the Strong Man's theft
 Would from his grasp be torn!

VIA TRIUMPHALIS

THE deep clear racing brook; the bridge
 Spanning both tide and river
 And linking the Road¹
 Whereby they came,
 Graving on rock each sequent name—
 Briton and Greek,
 Frank and Assyrian,
 Roman and Ramessid!
 On the far bank, where winds make quiver
 Those creepers hanging like woodnymphs' hair,
 Under the tangle the shapes are hid

¹ The Dog River—Lycus of Strabo—north of Beirut. The im-memorial coast road crosses it. There are over ten Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions on the rocks—also a Greek, and one by Marcus Aurelius, Arab and French inscriptions, and now ours.

(Time-blurred) and arrowy script which speak
Of the march of the arrogant Ninevite.
At hand, see the Stoic's entablature,
Rock-cut, which blazons Aurelius' boast !
New glaring white,
Lo, at its side what words proclaim,
Where the tide thrusts tongue-like in from the coast,
And the rains and the years' slow drift
Have buried the Flint-Man's tools, where pale
Pink flowers the branchèd asphodels lift—
Lo, there what words flaunt the tale,
At the Ages' end how my comrades strode,
Late in the centuries, last up the Conquerors' Road !
But rocks with their deeds let the Victors fill !
We have found a bliss that transcends their skill.
So, leaving the chiselled cliffs that declare
Whose fames would fain with the rocks endure,
And leaving the ancient sea, whose waves
Of merchant and corsair whisper and dream,
Checking the bragging garrulous stream
With name for name, his Turk to their Tyrian,
Strike in, to the hills' wild heart ! Strike in !
Let your wonder begin !
Lift, lift your eyes,
And thrill with surprise,
Aye, shout for the sight,
Far in, beyond height upon height,
Of Sannin, of, shouldering and snowy, that culminant
ridge,
Clear beautiful white,
And cleansing the vision !
Strike in, with the clear rushing water beside us,
And . . . that light at the valley's end !
Ah, the tall swaying feather-topped grass,
Deep as where the boar lurked when he slew
Adonis ! At foot of the glade,

A pampas, a wind-ruffled palisade
Of thyrses such as the Sylvans bear,
In the river-sand
For a kindly purpose set, be sure,
Since they hide, when the good Pan wills,
A man and a maid alone in the hills,
Alone, with all Gods to connive and befriend,
Where, placed for a guard, the great fells stand !
Lo, the brambles drooping, as when at the fair
Proud desolate Goddess, all wild, as she flew,
All anguished, they caught, and her blood splashed
 the thorn,
Splashed the rending briars,
And the Syrian uplands rang to her wail
For the hunter-lover all gashed and slain,
And the mocking caves,
Whose floors the Flint-Man's weapons strew,
From dripping ice-pillared vast recesses,
Her sorrow cast back in derision !
Sombrely showy, the brambles trail,
And, as for memorial, lift where we pass
Red boughs ! And the rose-thickets, tinct with grain
Of Autumn's glory, with scarlet leaves
Dashed through and through,
Blush deep with haws, as once with roses,
And glow, as a withered covert when fire's
Hot tongues in the dry sticks bicker !
But the Hill-Gods call; and they chide us,
Who on our steep path linger;
They have scattered the way with their signs to
 guide us;
They await their child,
The Lady for whom snowy crest, steep vale,
Were a home, and in lonely elf-beloved closes
The Forest and Winds were a foster-folk,
Till one, by whose speech a magic woke

Subtler than breathed from their music wild,
Drew near, and she turned, being mortal maid,
Leaving immortal lovers to mourn.
But she comes to your valleys again !
And a golden circle the crocus weaves
Idly, to hold her fast, who by spell
Stronger by far, can escape at will !
Yet blossom, and spill
Through the fairy cracks your vanishing gold !
Vainglorious, flaunt ! She is here to behold !
And let the quaint small spikes unfold
Of dwarf bee-orchis ! And clefts be lit
With cyclamens' flaming brushed-up tresses !
We have come to the heart
Of the hills, where the Great Gods dwell,
Who, wise themselves, wish lovers well ;
And the wilderness deepens round,
Slope on slope, thicket on thicket piled,
And the river is hushed by the River-God's
finger,
And hums, as it slips through the stones.
Plucking apart
The carob-boughs, we will climb and sit,
Where a giant boulder juts
Far out, and the eyes can look
Up to the ridge which the thin firs crown,
Can look down
Over the sharp stiff gleaming fence
Of ilex, and over the sprawling dense
Jungle of fragrant wax-berried myrtle,
To the quiet-singing brook.
Not ten miles hence,
In the copse where the Hunter died,
From his blood-drops sown in the soil
Sprang, purple and large,
The windflowers aflush by the river's marge,

And in rifts and ruts
Of the storm-seamed fells aflutter aglow ;
And, Spring by Spring, these brakes still know
Whose presence quickens the hallowed ground !
For Kypris walks,
Where the drab hard rocks to her grace are foil,
Foil till the hem of her swaying kirtle
Touches the herb and the budded stalks ;
When brute Earth atones
For the murdered boy, for the harboured boar,
For the shrinking flesh that the briars once tore,
Atones, with worship of blossom and leaf,
For the wanton wrong, for the bitter grief ;
And Lycus, thridding his purfled mazes,
His voice to a jubilant chant upraises ;
And Kypris walks, and the glimmering sheen
Of her robes waves, emerald-green on the green !

As down the Kedron Valley I was riding,
Where olives veil the rock-cut tombs I saw
An owl, who neither for myself had awe
Nor of that glaring hour had thought save scorn,
But ruffed his wings and perked each feathered
horn,
In anger that I came ; but I was glad.
For why ? You ask, as chiding
A mind so lightly stirred.
Know then, this joy I had
For sunlight on gray leaf and ragged stone ;
But most to see, vouchsafed to me alone,
There, on Athene's bush, Athene's bird.

THIS is he that came
Praising God in flame.

Through the desert's burning air,
With lips too parched for prayer. . . .

And in battle's gulping tide,
When friend and helper died. . . .

Lord, when clamant fears were loud,
This is he nor bowed
Nor denied the Name,
Nay, but overcame.

Whence this man, so hurt and frail,
So set, as in a jail,
'Mid days that suffered wrong,
He shall stand among
The angels, who excel in grace
Yet shall yield him place.
And, should they question why,
These his scars shall cry,
Shall answer and proclaim:
This is he that came
Praising God in flame.

THOU Living Purpose, dimly understood,
 Thou Whom I held for known,
 And Whom I served, a Will beyond my own,
 What is this word
 Now in the darkness of my spirit heard?
 And what this questioning, whether ill or good
 I know not, so my heart is vexed
 And all my mind perplexed?
 Whether Thou art at all, or just and wise
 (As once we held) and good past all surmise,
 Or evil, is a thing hid from my eyes,
 That only know Thou art not to be found.

Pity the heart Thy hands have made, the will
 In darkness wavering, fain to serve thee still!
 Now, ere the day in cloud and mist go out,
 Answer, and save! Now, in this dusk of doubt,
 To this poor flickering mind that perisheth,
 Ah, speak, with some clear word, of life, not death!

AT RAYAK

MID-WINTER; and through Anti-Lebanon
 Our sick men shivered as the train crawled on.
 A desolate wind over frore tundras whistled,
 Rattling and clanking the stiff willow-beds;
 In the orchard hedges mistletoe and haw
 Glistened with ice; sharp gleaming black aiguilles
 Shed their precipitate loads on the white fields.
 Beyond, on loftier Lebanon were fogs
 And numbing sleet; and choking storms of snow
 Clotted the air; a sheeted wall shone out,
 Makmal, Sannin, Khenisiyeh and Baruk.
 To southward, mightiest Hermon shut the vale.

At Rayak, halfway in the hollow heart
Of Syria, ere we climbed to Lebanon,
I saw a Turkish prisoner building dumps.
His shirt and shorts in ribbons round him hung;
His bare frost-bitten feet winced as they splashed
The icy pools. Shaking with cold and fever,
He raced about his work, with wild scared eyes.
Good-natured groups stood by, and watched him
there.

LOVELY with almond-blossom and flooded water,
L With wind-flushed sheen of swaying orchard-
meadows;
With azure starred of infrequent grape-hyacinth;
Misted blue with the fig-groves' wintry haze;
Ruddy with budded apricot; snowy with apple—
Damascus, now into April glory awakening.

LIGHT green of tamarisk shows
Pale on the dark sharp oleander-leaves ;
Deep through a jungle Yarmuk flows,
With loop and curve his swift path cleaves ;
And the long valley glows,
A burnished shield, far-sheeted with gold,
With light packed full as the hills can hold.
Though tamarisk's head's but a clouded dust,
His beauty faded, his youth grown pale,
Red hollyhocks
Flower from the steep rough rocks ;
Rose-laurels over the oil-black shale
Their fragrant pink-tipped spears upthrust ;
And the reed-muffled brook through the vale
Runs glad, for the Goat-God lies—
Great Pan, whom mosquitoes trouble not,
Who, being a Baal, is immune from flies—
Piping at ease in some wind-cool grot.

PANELLED in rock, the bearded kings, with hands
 Outstretched for menace, overlook the sea;
 Still the neat script, cut on their bossèd robes,
 Cries out for homage—side by side they boast,
 Pul and Sesostris. The tall asphodel
 Flowers from their bases down to the green flood
 Of rushing Lycus, and the cyclamen
 Roots in the crevices. And, higher yet,
 The runnels after rain wash free from clay
 Stone adze and arrowhead—this rough plateau
 Was once a mart, the caveman wrangled here:
 The ass's jawbone, set with flints for teeth
 (Ages ere Samson), the proud purchaser
 Flourished and bore to battle; ships of Tyre,
 Sailed, late, these waters, driving to their creeks
 Coaster and coracle and timid hide.
 Here, when Egyptian, when Assyrian, came
 Time had waxed old, and nations had grown tired.

Owl in the hollybush,
 Sitting so still,
 With wide eyes staring—
 What Fear climbs the hill?

Sit close in your covert,
 Your crimson-set fence
 Of sharp glowing leaves!
 What, bird! You flit hence!



Now, through the winter eve
Tinted with flame,
Riding, a Lady
Along the wood came.

Over damp drifted leaves
That deadened her pace,
She rode, nor drew rein
Till she saw the round face;

Then, checking her horse,
She raised her fair head
To the frost-polished leaves
And berries deep red.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

If the bird were a man,
He would leap for the sight,
But the foolish old owl
Is already in flight!

On the pale flushing skies,
To wet fields he flits down,
And is lost, as he settles,
Brown wings in the brown.

FLOWING at last, now Pix
 Through willowherb's jungle of gray dry sticks
 Straggles, while thwart-flung twig and grasses
 In flakes of shadow his waves thrust down.
 Black-berried privet cowers, drab forlorn,
 And the ragged thorn
 Out of all his swelling crimson crown
 Scarce a handful lifts of wrinkled haws.
 Flits furtive jay round bushes brown,
 And, with sudden rush under briar's red clusters,
 Fugitive blackbird flusters.
 Through the mist-suffused air, fine-drawn like gauze,
 A filmy wraith, December passes,
 And, seeming at rest in the heaven's half-height,
 The sun that should climb hangs mild and white.

SEE how the struggling fire
 From the damp heap in a white wraith escapes !
 But, deep within, the red heart fiercer glows,
 Till with a leap the ghost becomes a god,
 And shouts and dances on his shrivelling cage.

THE winter evening spills
Its store of quietness ineffable,
And from its horn of beauty fills
The empty elms with sunset.
Low fields lie blue in distance; the grove throws
A shadow-copse on the gleaming lake's repose.
Against the darkness glows
One lamp, a diamond.

THIS ancient thorn now like a beggar stands,
Thrusting through tattered sleeves its agued hands
That shake to the chill breeze, a mendicant
For such poor boon as niggard skies will grant
(Dribbling, as misers might, faint straggling beams,
Bronze rays of light, for Summer's golden streams).
Yet in old days this beggar was a Chief,
Regal with flowery crown and emerald leaf;
To beast and bird his bounteous house was free,
A haunt of building wren and singing bee,
Each scented bough of shining pensioners
More full than is the fire-bright gracious furze—
Scale-burnished beetles, chafers, hoverer-flies,
And moths with powdered plumes and soft deep eyes.
Here, where his subjects made their choice resort,
The Elvish Monarch held his jolly court,
Under a canopy rich-garlanded,
Where warm night-winds a fragrant incense shed.
Yet still one branch survives; and still, with Spring,
Life will flood back to this dead dreaming thing,
The swelling sap will rise, the old delight
Wrap up one wrinkled arm with blossomed white.

TUSCAN or Tyrian, Athenian bold,
 Arab or Spaniard, ghosts of voyageurs old,
 Thrice-valiant hearts who sailed these middle seas,
 Seeking the pillared gates of Hercules,
 A westward-beating scud, a flying drift
 Thrusting to sunset and the land's steep rift !
 Great vanished friends, the self-same sights ye had
 And with the self-same glories were made glad,
 Who saw the white sierras shoulder aloft
 Their snowfields tall, whence airs blow cool and soft,
 Who watched the puffins from the tranquil wave
 Spring, and the circling gulls ! But ye were brave !
 Knowing no earth beyond, but waters waste !
 While I float on, nor fear lest currents haste,
 Nor think, beyond these cliffs, of finis-terre,
 Sure of new capes where'er my bark can fare,
 Scorning all rumoured tale of God-cursed straits
 Or let of wildered waves and storm-clashed gates.

WHY should I shrink from life,
 Who have seen death's face ?
 How should I, if I would,
 For fear find place ?

Anger and scorn of men
 He leaves aside,
 Who has trampled into shards
 His brittle pride.

Strange words are cast about,
 And shouts arise,
 That these are foiled, and that
 Has won the prize !

But from my cherished hopes
This boast remains :
No crown I seek, whose limbs
Will brook no chains !

EVENING VOLUNTARY

Now is the time of the great evening peace,
When light and shadow lie side by side,
Chequering the fields ; day's oppression and pride
Are ending, the long misery and heat.
The coppersmith flags at his forge ; his hammer's beat,
Tonk, tonk, tonk, sounds but at intervals.
A cool breath stirs ; voices of birds awaken ;
A kingcrow chases a kite ; pert golden-eyed,
A myna struts ; on a sudden the air is shaken
With yelling laughter of kokils ; an oriole calls ;
These in their fashion all witness their joy of release.
Their fierce proud Lord forgoes his power to oppress.

I will seek the woods, the shining quietness
Of sal and flowering laurel—there wait till falls
The drift of darkening shadows, and memory throws
Over loved trees and spirit her cloak of repose.

RED-BERRIED banyan, still unsatisfied,
 For all your swelling bulk and verdurous pride
 Of sweeping branches, throwing out new sprays
 And fibres ever, seeking still to raise
 Fresh pillars and augment your kingdom vast,
 Fenced from the sun and the destructive blast
 Of the wild month of rains, that strips and tears
 Tough pipals and to earth the siris bears,
 Uproots the sturdy jack, and maims the teak !
 Somewhat in envy, banyan, do I speak ;
 Yet not unjustly. If my tree could show
 One-tenth so rich a pomp, such scarlet glow
 Of green-set fruit that feeds the scuffling bats
 And eager birds, and even for sordid rats
 Scatters a largesse . . . such a shining roof
 Of glossy leaves, Night's Temple huge sun-proof,
 With cool deep glooms where gods and flies awhile
 Shelter from noon . . . with many a dappled aisle,
 Where rays of light in harmless arrows fall,
 And tired winds sleep, and birds forget to call. . . .
 If this were mine, I should not grab more land
 Or seek proportions vaster, lot more grand ;
 I would not still of waxing empire dream,
 Chamber to chamber add, and giant beam
 With beam inlay, an endless swink and toil !
 With nervous itching fingers still more soil
 Grasp and for yet more swollen kingdom strive !
 No ! I should rest, and save my soul alive.

ON Sravan nights the rain
 Roars like a river in spate;
 The moving walls draw near
 With rush and bound, thin out and disappear,
 Then swell to a steady pelting pour again.
 Lying awake, I hear
 How the Spirit of Sravan walks the troubled night,
 Swaying the rain-thrashed winds for his delight,
 This way and that the clamorous dark dividing,
 Cleaving and thrusting the storm's black-silvery
 freight
 Hither and thither, racing receding gliding—
 As he walks the watery world with his demon-gait.

THE *bādal* burst; steadily fell all day
 The rain; the boys on the further side of the river
 Asked leave to go, for the water was rising fast.
 The rain poured on all night; dawn showed at last
 On a mist-swept twilight world, a dusk wherethrough,
 Twisting the rain in wisps, a rough wind flew,
 Whirling the showers like waterspouts round and
 round,
 And leaping upon the trees with the tiger's bound
 When he breaks the buffalo's back—with strain and
 shiver
 The garden moaned, as he ravaged and raved on his
 way.

¹ June-July, the rainiest Indian month.

² Cyclonic storm.

Last, with his thousand secret arms the river
From nulla and forest-pool his tribute drew,
And Susunia¹ shook his dark drenched tresses loose.
Huddled and hurrying, tumbling by hasty sluice,
The yellow turbid flood rushed in, and the bank
Crumbled, the swollen river the ricefields drank,
Islanding copse and orchard ; whirlingly shot,
Great trunks went spinning ; the stream like a boiling
pot
Seethed and hissed, its billows a winepress trod
By the stamping clay-plashed feet of an unseen god.

BENEATH this pipal, on a verminous mat,
With skin-clad ribs and withered shank she lies,
Dying by inches, after her fierce day
Of labour—carrying water, bearing babes,
And nameless menial tasks—the anguished toil
For the scant meal which came with so much fear.

Though we escape the rending hands of pain,
And shaking fevers, famine's choking grip,
When we have slaved and striven and brought forth
life,
Have sheltered youth to power, for our reward
Await us age and agues, twitching limbs,
And brain too worn to care save for release.

¹ A mountain in Bengal.

THese sojourners of a day and night pause here,
One with the friendly life of tree and road.

Against the many-twisted serpent-trunk
They prop a sheet of corrugated iron,
Filched from some railway-shed, and hang with pots
The bumps and cracks provided for their use;
A lean appalling 'pie'¹ keeps guard on goods
That kites and lepers would be loath to pinch;
Their stolen kerosene tins crows inspect
And pass them, certified as empty found.

Beneath a better bivouac by far
Than those I had in Mesopotamian sands,
Black matted heads peep out and watch the world.

I SAW a jungle-dweller, dark, unclad
Except for waist-rag—in his ears he had
Rosettes of oleander, glimmering red
Stars on the close-webbed blackness of his head.
Stark in the drizzling eve he stood, and made
Tough sal-roots leap beneath his mattock's blade.
His smoky hut, and hungry squalid brood,
Waiting these sticks to cook their scanty food,
Sufficed, and at his toil he smote amain,
Flaunting his gladness through the cheerless rain.

¹ A pariah dog.

AGES since, in a blinding flash,
 He came to earth, with shattering crash,
 (Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

Cleaving the quaking skies asunder,
 With lightning chisel and mallet of thunder,
 (Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord).

The tallest simul from crown to root,
 He smote, and an old man slew at its foot,
 (Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

And, after the storm, the people found
 A jagged rock on the blackened ground
 (Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord).

So amid the trees they built a dome,
 Shrining the stone, the Great God's home;
 (Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

And year by year, as the tired year ends,
 When the God through heaven his war-clouds sends,
 (Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

When his white plumes flash on the dark expanse,
 And his thunders rattle, his lightnings dance,
 (Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

Women of barren aching breast,
 Women by grievous ~~Fate~~ distressed
 (By Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

¹ Fair.

With frightened faces and eyes that stare
Bright as the pots of fire they bear
(For Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

In procession move to the shrine, and throw
Their burdens down, till the ground's aglow
(For Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

Aglow with the tongues that flicker and shoot
Like a thousand snakes that sway to a flute
(To Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord).

Then home, through the folk and the clamours loud,
On the dust-choked roads which the ox-carts crowd
(From Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

With hearts where Hope's red flames upthrust,
Lit at those flames which danced in the dust
(To Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

They fare, through the eve that's athrob with drum
And cymbal's clash, and with shouted hum
'Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord.'

SULLENLY friendly, watching me they sit,
 Their battered hands drawn close across their knees.
 What should he say, this saheb who means them well,
 Yet in whose veins the blood runs clean, whose limbs
 No fires of anguish eat?

A woman there

Dandles her babe; the tainted children¹ crowd
 In front, against my left; that man behind,
 With large hot fretful face, towers o'er the rest,
 The leader in the lepers' parles, who fans
 Their smouldering grievances to flaming speech.
 My speaking done, they cluster round my bike.
 'How do they feel?' 'Well.' But I probe more near—
 'The treatment?' Then an angry clamour bursts,
 Of the injection's pain, the fever's throb.
 'The profit?' 'None!' A young man lifts his feet,
 Shows me two round deep pits—will these grow well?
 A woman thrusts out knuckled palms—to these
 Will fingers come again? I talk of cures,
 Of life given slowly back, of the fell plague
 Quenched in the crumbling limbs, that break no more.

But, as I go, about my head there scatters
 A rain of bitter unbelieving mirth.

¹ A technical term. Some children of lepers are untainted.

AGAINST the knife-keen wind she ran for warmth,
Her torn thin cloth drawn close about her head,
Her huddled body twisted to the cold,
Each sinewy limb a witness to the wrongs
Of sixty buffeting years.

A clatter of hoofs
Rang on the road—an English lady came,
Ruling her proud slave briskly and easily.
The season's welcome sharpness whipped the blood
To riot in her cheeks, and in her eyes
Fanned to a flame the never-smouldering joy.
A gracious nod; and the tall waler's strength
Had borne her onward, one with the bright form
That danced her exquisite wildness out of sight.

Spirit of Beauty, doubly manifest
In these, my blood ! Let not the visions go,
As went this Indian dawn, without they leave
A heart more quick to feel, an eye not blind
To glory's steps, a braver firmer mind !

THese tigerlilies' petals curve
 Back like oryx-horns; their arrogant grace
 Makes my brain an Arabian Nights; they dance,
 Sultans in the Damascus of my soul.
 O sinister ebony-dotted beautiful flowers!
 Mind of the world, that Thou shouldst think of these!

Fire is a thought of Thine; this pine-fed flame;
 And smoke which grows from fire; these warm
 dark firs;
 Flower-downy moths which flit from fir to flame;
 This wall of mist, which shuts, heaven-high vale-deep.

A thousand things there are whose beauty pains,
 Tearing the exquisite sense with sharp delight:
 The broad gold smile of sunflower; prim device
 Of snapdragon, dainty in such different hues;
 Begonia on these climbing cloud-wrapt ways;
 Demure red-tongue-outthrusting fuchsia; dense
 Fragrance of heliotrope; the crinkled floss
 Of evening primrose, pollened thick, so soft
 The fingers feel it like a fairy's plumes;
 Pink sea-thrift carpeting a crumbled cliff;
 A Cornish moor, bee-murmurous heather-scented
 Sun-drowsy, lulled with chime of double seas;
 A Cotswold hazel-coppice, primrose-starred;
 Moonlight on Indian waters; frosty skies
 Of cold bright stars.

Mind whence my mind was made,
Thinker, Dreamer, Painter, Architect !
Why hast Thou so with beauty crammed this world,
Which we have crowded close with graves of war,
With factories, palaces, and works of art?

64 THE AUTHOR WRITES HIS OWN EPITAPH

STANGER, if passing by you seek to learn
What man was he whose ashes fill this urn,
Know: there's a ghost remembers now by Styx
He marched with Maude, was with the few who
first
The embattled sandhills of Samara burst,
And once hit Faulkner over the ropes for six.

OUR last witch was seen
 Astraddle a plank, crossing this brook, the Ray;
 From the Bletchington¹ slaughter
 Riding this way,
 Cromwell's troopers saw her and shot her;
 She ducked, but they got her;
 Their bullets crashed through the willows, and whipped
 The yeasty moss to a froth of green,
 And singing smote
 Beelzebub's spawn in her foul fair throat;
 She tumbled, and gripped
 Her see-sawing raft—it lurched, she slipped,
 Then choked in a swirl of red water.

'Shame on the devils who murdered a lass'
 (The neighbours cried) 'scarce turned seventeen !
 The bonniest wench in these borders seen.'
 She was fond of a dip in the Ray,
 And astride of a log that had floated her way
 She climbed in sport
 Just when those thieves o'er the bridge were coming,
 Those sour-faced brutes whose bonnets with bees
 were humming—
 Who deemed all women were witches, who knew
 All lives but as stuff to be slain, save the few
 Whom the Lord considered His own (*these* slew !).
 Fresh from their butchery Bletchington way,
 They were looking for somebody else to slay—
 So they shot her, in short.

¹ In 1643, Cromwell caught a body of Royalist cavalry on Islip Bridge, and chased them to Bletchington, two miles away, where they were all killed or captured.

And Matthew Hopkins,¹ when he heard,
Was woundily vexed, and averred
It was evilly done.
He'd have dragged her ashore, then sifted her out
(Those clumsy troopers had wrecked his sport),
Searching for Satan's sign with a pin;
Then have chucked her in,
Shrewdly trussed, big toe to thumb,
To try could she swim.
Drowned, she'd be cleared as a witch, no doubt;
There'd be one wench less in the world, to lure
Young saints astray into thoughts impure;
While, had she swum—
That is, if her face but a moment rose,
As she flung and tossed in her strangling throes—
Her obscene idolatry proved, she'd have gone
To the gallows-tree, in her Master's rout.

And Harold the poet concurred
(Three centuries later), the shooting was wrong.
But the neighbours' talk was absurd!
The girl *was* a witch;
On her ivory shoulder a black dog huddled,
Her incubus, Satan's flame-eyed whelp,
And she rode this ditch
By her paramour's help.
Incubus, succubus, gnome, and sprite,
With devils by day, devils by night,
The world is a warren—the man is dense
Who doubts when the proofs are so many and strong.
The camera's evidence clinches the case
With fairies in Yorkshire—the very last place

¹ Matthew Hopkins, self-styled 'Witch-Finder General,' who was responsible for some hundreds of executions between 1643 and 1647. It seems likely that in 1647 he was found guilty by his own methods, and hanged for witchcraft.

One would look to find fairies—the thing's plain to
sense !

Black magic's a cert.—those neighbours were fuddled.
But the *shooting* was wrong ;
And thumbscrew and ducking and pricking with
pins—
The witch had a right to her picturesque sins.

Last—an irrelevance—when I consider
In what a storm of dread the generations
Went by ; how demon thrones and dominations
Darkened the mind, madding with slavish fright
What even at ease can scarcely judge aright
(The mind that in a fierce delirium sent
Frail doddering eld to hideous punishment,
And crushed defenceless beauty, hardly so
Slaking its pangs of throbbing gibbering woe) ;
How every generation to the next
Passed on its tainted blood and vision vext ;
I wonder not that shadows haunt us still,
That silly thoughts and fears the people fill,
That nonsense breeds in even a poet's brain—
I marvel anyone is kind or sane.

IN the meadow behind the house
This morning I saw
Cows feeding on apple-blossoms.
Wrench
Crunch
Munch
Shatter and scatter,
They bit off more than they could chew,
And splashed the grass
With pink bright petals.
There they stood, crushing
In wrinkled and crinkled,
Asquint and askew,
Wicked black jaws
Mouthfuls of present beauty
And harvest to be.

I told my neighbour the poet.
He scowled, and said he knew
Reviewers exactly like those cows.

THROUGH my pollard-willows flit
 Airy lives of wren and tit;
 I watch the sailing kestrel pause
 And clutch the sky with quivering claws;
 A fleet of gabbling ducks goes by;
 Then swans—stiff puffed galleons high—;
 Dark-etched against their snowy pride
 Like grey-blue clouds two cygnets glide.
 Here, beyond the world withdrawn,
 I fling my length upon the lawn;
 And with indifferent gladness see
 Stream and cloud and season flee.

CUCKOOS, with welcoming zest,
 From pollards tousled and tangled
 Shouted; and hawthorns pressed
 The water with boughs thick-spangled.
 A snake, its yellow head
 High-held, with threaded gleam
 Athwart us, as we sped,
 Cut through the brimming stream.
 Winking forgetmenots
 Swung signal from the shore
 To the mayflies' tiny yachts,
 Danced on a foam-shot floor;
 Thigh-deep in golden pile
 Of buttercups, the kine
 Munched with their grass the while
 Mouthfuls of green sunshine.

OLD Hall the ashes from his pipe knocked out,
 Blew through it, then he said: 'You've asked
 about

These water-finders, sir. There's two I knows
 And uses, when on building-jobs I goes;
 They've found me many a spring.

John Forde of Noke,

The blacksmith—he's a tall man, tough as oak—
 He *fights* against the power with all his might;
 He holds his hands out *so*, with sinews tight.
 And yet, for all that he's so strong and big,
 The power's that fierce, I've seen a hazel-twig
 Twist all askew, when in his fingers gripped,
 Tugged earthward! Though he held it fast, it slipped!
 And, when the spring's beneath, his muscles *swell*—
 You'd not believe me, if I was to tell!
 That's why he's grown so strong and large of arm—
 For he's a great stout man, and takes no harm.

'T'other's a different sort. You've heard, perhaps,
 Of Islip Tom? He's one of these small chaps,
 And *weak*. He cannot fight the power—he shakes,
 He lets it *slide* over his arms, and takes
 The shock deep in his breast; and people say
 This water-work will be his death one day.
 He's grown *that* weak—his chest is all sunk in,
 His face is sharp, his arms are dry and thin.
 He shudders when the current hits his heart;
 The sweat runs from his head, his eyeballs start.
 And that's why, when I has him for the job,
 I always pays an extra couple of bob.'

WHEN measles reached our village,
Miss Wilmot said :
It was the chapel children had them first—
Argal, a Wesleyan local preacher brought them—
The chapel children by a judgment caught them—
And next, the same disfiguring anger burst
Upon those children of the church who played
With chapel children. Then the plague was stayed.

So all was well.

Seceders and encouragers of schism
Alike were sprinkled with the self-same chrism ;
And, for the weeds that through the corn had spread,
On those who sowed and those who gave them tillage
The one stroke fell.

She doubted watching Providence no longer—
With every year her faith in God grew stronger—
Miss Wilmot said.

ATHREE-MONTHS' drought, the churches called for
rain ;
The bishops made new forms of prayer—in vain.
We tried a cup-match then ; Heaven, uninvoked,
Relented ; and the char-à-bancs were soaked.

GILBERT MURRAY
 Lecturing in Christ Church Hall—
 Harry Eight,
 Puff-cheeked overfed and fury,
 Straddles o'er him on the wall,
 Bulging-eyed, as when his bellow
 Crashed on Lambert's plea, with 'Fellow !'
 Thou shalt burn !'—or when he sent
 Nan or Katherine from his bed
 To the grave's embrace instead.

And Swagger-gait,
 As Geneva's name he catches,
 Fusses, fatly insolent.
 'Body o' me ! lo, what is this
 New false doctrine now that hatches
 In Heresy's metropolis ?'
 Visibly in their pictured stations
 Tremble all the Dead, to mark
 How the coldly-bestial stare
 Kindles to a wolfish glare
 On that bold heresiarch
 Lecturing for the League of Nations.

But Professor Murray,
 Always gentle courteous reasoning, never in a hurry,
 Tells us, 'In some minds there seems confusion.
 As for this so-called *right* of making war,
 Civilized people more and more
 Are everywhere coming, I think, to the con-
 clusion. . . .'

He does not see at all
That listening Wrath upon the wall,
Looming through the painter's glaze
With axe and gallows in its gaze.
'So-called right, indeed !'

A PERFECT BEAR

THE Bear is much misunderstood ;
Our writers do him grave injustice.
So listen, Frank—no beast more good
And worthy of your deepest trust is.

Witness his kindness to those two
Their wicked uncle had forsaken !
I tell a story known to few—
The children wept, by night o'ertaken,

When lo, a fury friendly form !
He gave to each a paw, then shelter ;
Those tiny travellers from the storm
Into his den ran helter-skelter.

They heard outside the hissing sleet ;
They heard the forest groan and stagger ;
The sky was like a tattered sheet
Ripped by the lightning's fiery dagger !

They cried at first with fear ; but he
Did with kind looks and ways restore them ,
His capers filled their hearts with glee ;
He set wild raspberries before them ;

He brought dry bracken for their bed;
 He shook down leaves of weeping willow;
He placed a glow-worm by their head;
 He pulled his fur to make their pillow.

All night they slept without a stir,
 Then breakfasted on wild bees' honey;
He took them to a woodcutter,
 And gave him wax to sell for money.

Was this not kind? And yet to-day
 How often! Frank, the words are cruel!
'He is a perfect *bear*,' we say!
 A perfect bear! Fairplay's a jewel!

Why, if he were *a perfect bear*,
 He would be something so entrancing,
His very name would banish care
 And we should hardly keep from dancing!

PHILOSOPHY

BUNNY at burrow sits
 And groweth wise thereby;
 He sees the flying rooks,
 And has no wish to fly.

For all the wrangling noise
 Wherewith they beat the air,
 It cuts no grass, nor brings
 One lettuce to their lair !

And, as philosophers
 Chew on their straws of talk,
 So Bunny chews on his,
 And masters root and stalk.

‘I let those fellows brag
 And call their flappings fun ;
 For me the world’s a field
 Wherein to skip and run—

‘A pantry packed with grass !
 Ah, see my whiskered face !
 Have *you* a face as calm
 And wise and full of grace ?’

VALETTA FROM THE SEA, 1927

WHERE the Eyes of Christendom looked out
 To spy the Turkish sails,
 What legends crown the grey redoubt,
 Waking heroic tales ?

‘Ask for McEwan’s Splendid Stout.’
 And ‘Gait’s Fine Burton Ales.’

WHAT berries on your glimmering boughs ye bear,
 Grey Olives, like a flock in moonlight seen,
 Blanching the field and casting on the air
 A haze of dimness ! reverie and dream—
 Of Athens and the City-Guarding Queen
 (The olive-tree's inventress)—of the glow
 That lit the dusk within an old man's brain
 (Remembering how through noon the nightingale
 Deep in the dark of your close-plumaged boughs
 Sang to Colonus' million-crocused vale)—
 Of men, my friends, who from the lagging train
 (Their eyes not cleansed of the deceptive gleam
 That dances over Iraq's desert waste)
 In an April morn with sullen clouds hung low
 Emerging marched to where with muffled roar
 The guns were waves bursting on battle's shore—
 Of Kedron midnights when your leaves were roof
 Above a blackness pierced and interspaced
 Only with glow-worms' lamps of glassy green.

Grey Olives, 'tis the man ye knew ! for proof,
 Look in my eyes, and see what memories rouse
 At glimpse of your soft leaves and silken sheen.
 No alien this—whose spirit understands
 Each scent and sound of these beloved lands !

77 THIS brain, with sorrow's dint
 Battered and scored—
 As a chalk-scrabbled board,
 So, with drudge
 Of anxious pain, and gray dim thought,
 One smear and smudge—
 Will nevermore take print
 Of beauty (once that wrought
 Its impress fine, clear without effort caught),
 Unless that, riving sheer,
 Some knife fell, scraping clean
 This folly, wisdom's blur
 And scars where toil's hard slipping edge has been.
 Then—if no streak of memory stayed, no white
 Of dingy thought, to mar new scriptures bright—
 Then might it bear
 Image of beauty's eyes—as from a glass
 Fling back the grass
 Wind-shimmer-stirred,
 Or flashing water, yellowing moon, quick bird,
 The virgin frankness of the encrimsoned air
 When March the almond-branches shakes,
 Or Earth's wild brightness when she wakes
 'Mid snow new-fallen, with dazed and dazzling stare.

'**A**ND the imperial votaress passed on
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.'
To me, beneath the elms of Magdalen sitting,
The old words, round their netted cage slow-flitting,
Fell pausing.

'We have cates and wines enow;
And, for the general, ale.'

'Tis well. Do thou
Some nimble-witted fellow hire, to frame
An hour of mirth and spangles, prinked with name
Of nymph and hero—such a pretty toy
As our court-scribblers make with Venus' boy,
Dian and dolphins, tritons, lovers true
(But crossed by fate), Mars' warrior-retinue,
The Amazonian lady chaste as ice—
Some delicate and intricate device
Well sorting with a nuptial ceremony.'

And Shakespeare, bidden to prepare a mask
For Essex his great patron, at his task
Pondered, and juggling jigging patterns made,
Shuffled the stale 'quaint' counters of his trade—
Cupid all armed, the cold moon, hearts and flowers,
Pure maidens, burning shafts, and woodbine bowers—
Till his mind wandered back to earlier skies,
That domed a lad walking in paradise
Rapturous as he watched the dusk ablaze
With rocket stars that threaded fiery ways
And then shot madly from their spheres, to awake
The moon-tranced glimmer of the sleeping lake,
Where white fangs hissed in angry seethe around
The Silver Fysshe whose back a mermaid crowned—

A mermaid singing, as she rode the tide,
Of Gloriana great and glorified,
Of Gloriana and a gazing earth
(When Gloriana came to Kenilworth) .

But when the play attained a second birth,
Before vast Gloriana in her court
(Her mind relaxed from many a harsh report
And rumour), did the imperial votaress
Behind the music of sweet flattery guess
A poor man's hopes, and send a gracious word
To enchant her praiser? Or belike she heard
Unheeding, and the poet left to shame
Of failure purchased in ignoble aim?
We know not. But the quiet words have wrought
Unwitting record of their master's thought—
Of how a young man strove to please a queen:
Of how a boy (what time in fierce delight
He walked a field with torch and pageant bright)
Once raised his eyes, and saw the moon serene
Sail far aloof, as in time's sky she shone.
The ambitious rockets flared, earth shook to see
And shouted forth in tinsel revelry!
But the imperial votaress passed on
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.

A THOUSAND faces filled the room; this hall
With beauty and with greatness flashed—all, all
A darkened sea upon whose desert shone
One face—a star now all the rest have gone!

WITH words as counters, talk of day and night,
 Sun, moon and stars, using such toys as these,
 I play, who towards the timeless shape my flight,
 Seeking a home that knows nor land nor seas.
 Hereafter, on the mirror of that mind
 If any shadow of these times should fall,
 Amid that brighter world how shall I find
 Utterance that can my vanished dreams recall—
 What wonder with the orange moon arose
 Over my palms or on stark Moab hills;
 With Weston's brook what whispering music flows
 Through hazel shade which March with wind-flowers
 fills?

So, after sleep, its mists of fleeing thought
 Vainly upon the mind's clear sky are sought.

THE River glares with green and crimson eyes,
 And, like the monster-haunted Amazon,
 Bellows and groans from alligator-throat.
 Night passes. And Manhattan's mountains rise
 Pale in the pearl-white dawn—chaste calm remote.
 The lurid blatant beast with dark has gone.

ROAD TO HARPER'S FERRY

82

By wayside proof we near the place
Where the deep-set eyes and the storm-beat face
Gazed from the gallows' Pisgah-height.
But life is jazzy and life is merry;
Life is a lounge with a Lucky handy;
Life is oysters and all that's 'yummy',
A carted beast with a well-lined tummy.
Life has forgotten the day-long fight,
Body that moulders, spirit that smoulders,
Soul that goes marching on from its stroke
Wherewithal two nations to arms awoke.
Tree unto tree, the miles repeat
'Tootsie Wafers' and 'John Brown Candy'
('We candygram it from Harper's Ferry').
'Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet.'

IN HOSPITAL, BROOKLYN

83

The sun, nigh setting, strikes the wall,
And a chill through its darkness sent
(Or was it that creeper's merriment?)
Serves a thousand dusks to recall—
Hours that were living with passionate thought
Or deeds that a young man's energy wrought,
Though the clacking shuttle of Time has left
Only a tapestry's faded weft
Of dim-drawn figures that skip and waver
When a chance wind rises with fever and quaver,
And glint in a mockery of meaning
When a dying glow is flung on the screening.

While centuries run,
Even as I by a patch of sun,
A flurry of leaves, a brick's red grain,
Men will be waked to vision again;
Will strive as I, with words that blur,
To tell how their minds were stabbed astir,
What pageant shone in the brain's dead spaces,
What clamour arose from what vivid faces !

But all is a sapless bloodless mat,
Whose pictures are dulled, whose colours have run,
And Memory, snatching at this and that,
Is transient breeze and vanishing sun.

THEIR helplessness was outstretched hands of prayer,
Beseeching pity!—or gesture of despair!

Toward twilight's menace, fearful of their fate,
Asses and slaves and womenfolk went pattering;
Milch-camels with their colts at foot lurched swaying;
He-goats and she-goats, ewes with burdened gait,
Night-peering pausing kine—they moved toward
hate,
To charm to ruth—or slake it with their slaying—
Or fugitive fanwise spread a shield in scattering—
A flung-up torch of doom, the death delaying
From one who craven waited
On Jabbok's beach and with his heart debated !

What monstrous anger moves upon the air?
What river-god comes rushing from his lair?
Jabbok? that watched the caravans escape?
The oleander-ambushed taking shape?
Mist of a menace rising from his waves?
Body of a blood-lust welling from his caves?
He claims a life, the Watcher of the Ford!
Darkness has given him power; and he is lord!

Scant presage of this dusk did dawn declare,
Supplanter! greeting thee with angel-hosts!
Setting thy steps upon a course so fair,
To trip thee downward to the realm of ghosts!
Familiar converse with the sons of light
Closing in battle with the king of night!

Thy trembling eyes ran flutteringly afar;
Started; and shook! fools! fools! as fugitives are!
Straining, they saw, where sunset smouldered red
On Gilead's crest, those sudden figures dread
Which sought thy life! 'Twas vision; yet thy gaze
Still followed, flaming out from thy amaze,
While dark and distance and the world's steep rim
Drank lusty serf and warrior moving dim
As shadows into shadow! And thy Doom
Couched in the chuckling brook and in the gloom
Of whispering agnuscastus, drawing tense
With wrath and laughter at thy lack of sense!
Thou, wast thou mad, to leave thy life alone
In such wild gathering angers? Hadst thou known

Thou hadst not in the half-light lingered so
On Jabbok's shores, that housed thy raging foe !
Now, paramount where'er these waters run,
Unquelled, and free of the all-guarding Sun,
He holds thee in his frontiers, in a field
Where flight shall not avail thee ; nor to yield !
Supplanter, thou art friendless ! see, the waste
Has trapped thee whom thy spearmen have out-
paced !

What thought, Supplanter, floods thy dizzying brain ?
What planet rises on this sea of pain ?
That Earth who gave—Yes ! yes ! thy heart avers
That Earth, who gave this grim autochthon thews,
Earth is *thy* mother too ! nor will refuse
Her aid to desperate valour ! thou art hers !
And, though thou sway and faint, though every vein
Distend to madness, madness gives thee hope
To grip these ravening hands nor grant them scope !
And, body to his body, cling him fast
Till dawn compel him to his caves at last !

Thy blood is dead within thee ; in thy mind
Life flickers ; thou, a misery surging blind,
No other function hast but agony !
The lover's clasp without his ecstasy !
A pressure and a pang ! Yet rouse ; and hark !
Thine Adversary finds voice ; the ebbing dark
Drains on its tides the valour thou hast held—
His strength flows from him, by a man excelled !
While courier-tremors now the dimness shake,
He pleads for freedom ere the morning break !

To slay thy soul he gripped thee unaware !
Yet now his dragon-hood unpuffs ; his prayer
Is toward the waters and their flower-capt brink !
But shall he cheat thee thus ? Assail ? and shrink
When thou hast foiled him ! He that in his hour,
When night had flung thee captive to his power,
Sought thy destruction, shall he leave thee so ?
No ! no ! But bless thee, going—or shall not go !

Thou hast prevailed ! thou hast, ere day undimmed
The cloud of foe who fought thee mighty-limbed
(That face of demon-wrath—or smiling peace ?),
Thy blessing won, and given a God release !
Thou as a Prince hast power ; a crest of fame
Is on thee from this night, a victor-name !
Jabbok forgets the dusk of turbulent throes
And through his oleanders murmuring goes ;
The mist has fled from his enchanted stream,
And all the ghostly battle of a dream.

Bright over Penuel dawns thy saviour Sun !
Thou haltest on the field that thou hast won.

INTO your arms your gray olives withdrawing,
Gray stony hills, you lie watching aloof
Rhone lying couched 'neath the sky's pale roof,
Rhone with his cypresses massed on the bank,
Dead reeds and poplars that shiver and clank,
Rhone running blue through a snow-powdered land.

(Springs from the earth what pictured exhalation?
Heart, you remember! 'Twas Tigris then, for Rhone;
Gray hills of Persia, a pinnacled desolation,
Snow-capt they rimmed the river-wrinkled plain!
See, 'tis no mist that stars with eyes once known,
Eyes that I loved ! the dead have come again !)

Stony gray hills, from my thought draw apart !
Leave me alone with the land of my heart :
I would see only that sole river run—
That wintry sun
The waste slow thawing !
Would see them again, my friends where they stand,
Eyes under hand
Watching the battle draw near wherein died
Youth and my friends—who were friendship's pride !

(*Faune, Nympharum fugientum amator.*')

—HORACE, *Odes III, 18.*)

FAUNUS, lover of the flying Nymphs,
 Fleeing himself before the steps of Hunger,
 Here, on the terraced hill become one field,
 Among the rocks whose bases blunt the plow
 And toss the waves of wheat aside has gathered
 His family of flowers and timid lives.
 The veteran olives round the ridge encamp
 And lift scarred arms of threat, but storm it not.
 Man's hungry generations vex and pill
 This good primeval lord, and sit in siege
 Against his refuge, yet for fostering airs
 Of blossomtide and harvest need his favour,
 And therefor hold their blustering lush battalions
 Back from the flinty isle whose sudden rampart
 Shatters the rim of cultivation's sea.
 The blind-worm whips through the low-sweeping
 brake
 Of cistus and genista; through the stars
 Of yellow orchis the green lizard rustles;
 With sentinel eyes grape-hyacinth guards the steep;
 And Faunus grips his ancient empire fast.

1650: *the Honourable East India Company to all Master Mariners:*
'We look that our vessels, ere launched on the seas
From Ind to Mozambique, be loaden with these:'

SANGUIS draconis:
 Fruges citronis:
 Tramboon and cinnamon:
 Myrrh and myrabalon:
 Tamarind: olibanum:
 Civet and cardamum:
 Seed-lac and shellac:
 Mastick and styrac:
 Pepper and pepperdust:
 Cloves garbled, ungarbled:
 Bloodstones deep-marbled:
 Attar and bela-scent:
 Orris-root: orpiment:
 Nutmegs and rubies:
 Ginghams and sallampores:
 Adatas and nassapores:
 Newries and cocatores:
 Percalloes and kastapores:
 Gurrahs and balasores:
 Calamdanies and scrutores:
 Derribauds and kerebauds:
 Byrampautes and durguzees:
 Indigo and niccanees:
 Turmeric and cavanees:
 Grogerans and cuttanees:
 Spikenard and dungarees:
 Brawles: oringall bettelees:
 Oppopanax and scamony:
 Chequeens and toqueens:
 Terrindans and nainsooks:
 Doreas and tabbenees:
 Taramandees: elatchees:

Sovaguzzees : pautkees :
Mercolees : egbarrees :
Morees and tapseils :
Damask and longees :
Benzoin and bezoar :
Red earth and redwood :
Dutties and rhanders :
Dihlee stuffs and khanders :
Birdseyes and deryeyes :
Diapers and dimitties :
Amber and ambergris :
Mullmulls and methelage :
Hornes of rhenosseries :
Choublets and romaulees :
Soosees : wax of bees :
Harital and patanees :
Tuttenagg and jellolsyes :
Chillies and baftas :
Benjamins and petambers :
Tanjebs and jemewars :
Vermilion and aloes
Both lignine and socatrine :
Sayes cantan and salloes :
Pillongs and lingloes :
Camphor and sannoës :
Safflower and rangoes :
Pumeloes and mangoes :
Quicksilver and cossaes :
Hummums and chucklaes :
Duppetin catchaes :
And prinked perpetuanoes :
Allejars and pulfetoes :
Musk and salpicadoes :
Pearls and pintadoes :
Red cloths of China :
With taffaties of Persia :

And grezio corall
(Large-branched, well packt,
And free from dust and scruffe) :
Buckshaws and wormseed :
Tincal and cowries :
Diamonds and cassia and elephants' teeth.

REPENTANCE FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY

FORGIVE me, Rose and Nightingale !
The poet lays aside
The silly wisdom that he served,
His misbelieving pride !
Beleaguered in a jangling mob
Of sordid jays and crows,
I did not hear thee, Nightingale !
I did not see thee, Rose !

Accept me, Moth and downy Owl !
Show me your warm deep eyes,
Moon-glimmering wings ! night-gliding ghost
On velvet winking skies !
The heart that turns from righteousness
(As others turn from sin)
With fierce repentance such as mine,
No devil back shall win !

BARODA WILDERNESS
(*India Revisited*)

'BUT when returned the youth? The youth no more
Returned exulting to his native shore,
But in his place there came—'
Yes? yes?
"There came

A worn-out man.'¹

"Tis true. And yet, this frame
Knows quick renewals of the old delight!
I see, I see it all! each dear-loved sight
Springs to my vision fresh as to the gaze
Of youth that dreamed not of the hostile days,
That had no thought of war or martyred friends,
But looked that quiet deeds should have like ends!

Dust-coloured doves upquivering from the dust
With flash of white! You can bestow your trust
Where love has set it safe! Dear forest-folk!
Here is no step that should your fears provoke!
You scarcely move aside! Then, wondering, scan
What stranger comes. Doubt not! I am the man
Who walked your ways so long, and wrought no
harm.

You, Forest-Lady! who in sharp alarm
And half-checked wrath (pondering what rude assault
Stirs hither from the city) turning halt,
With brows in question arched: 'Who comes
this way?
An Englishman! yet unequipped to slay!'

¹ See Crabbe, *The Parting Hour*.

Spring—*Lakshmi*!¹ *Vanadevi*!² whose progression
The waiting woods acclaim with swift succession
Of shining flowers! well my *sannyasi*-race
You know, whose spirits keep in every place
Our island solitude, and early learn
Into what dust our days of action burn!
And, Lady, test me! touch each tree in turn
And ask its name—*sāl*, *palās*, *bhuru*, *kend*,
Kusum and *bhelai*, *simul* whose towers ascend
To scarlet lamps of glory, *dhaiphul*'s spread
Of twisting bugles, honeyed, horned, and red!
Now who I am you know! your eyes speak peace!

Spirit in Whom our spirits find release
(That lie in bondage long)! I had known fear
That toil and pain and tedious ponderings drear
Had dulled the heart and jangled all the mind,
So that Thy ways I'd walk and walk them blind
Where once I saw. This hour my hope stands sure,
That evermore Thy mercies must endure!
No Canaan I desire, but here confess
My heart is in this lovèd wilderness,
Where I would wander still, so I might see
Its myriad shining eyes in league with me!
Since neither guilt nor folly could provoke
That Thou should'st end my friendship with Thy
folk,
Here has my rest begun, my timeless rest!
Desireless yet of all desires possessed!
Nor wilt Thou in Thy righteous anger swear
To exclude me from this peace Thou dost
prepare!

¹ The Hindu goddess of beauty and fortune.

² 'Wood-goddess.'

SLIM body trim-knit !
 In your huntress kit
 How bravely you wear
 Winged Victory's air !
 And how gallantly sit
 Your brisk buoyant horse !
 From the fetching cap
 To black-buskinéd thighs
 And each neatly hung boot
 A darling distinctly !
 Compactly ! succinctly !
 Pocket-amazon-size !

At the high wood's edge
 They have tidied the bounds.
 The thorn is fresh-made :
 Newly slashed : duly laid :
 And—there's a gate !
 But (why hesitate ?)
 Your cob knows his job
 (He has smashed quick before :
 He can smash it once more !):
 Firm knees, too, he knows,
 That their pressure impose,
 To his saddle drawn tightly !
 Pricked ears are stirred
 By a low urgent word :
 And, sinews and senses
 (Like a wave ere it plunges !)
 Pulled taut from all straying,
 The strong body lunges
 The sharp brittle hedge.
 The swing of a heel—
Flick ! flick ! of a switch—

A will that is steel
Enforces his duty !
And muscle and beauty
Have squandered the ditch
And barged a wide gap
That is like a barndoar !
And—‘Where are the Hounds?’
Bright lips sing out brightly.

I could have told you (had you waited)
Well, somewhat ! But the Wind-God swerved his
hand,
Jangling the land
With tossed-down noise of baying.
You canter off elated—
I think to hold your course
(Years hence !) while farmers fret :
Come war, come peace, come world’s upset,
A darling by way of profession !
A darling by life’s obsession !
Rarely on foot:
And usually
crashing fences.

WE have come to the end of The Waste Land :
 Its wind-carved static waves of herbless sand:
 (Passionless central sea long sunken
 To sailless shoreless sahara).
 Grumbling and stumbling we passed
 The cheating wells whose waters were stagnant lies
 (We could not drink of the waters, for they were
 bitter,
 Therefore the name was called Marah):
 The skeleton dumps that were singing caravans—
 Death's picnic had left its litter.
 Yes, this was a poet's skull
 (That quick beady glitter?
 Those are rats that were his eyes;
 They gnaw at the thongs of skin that have cracked
 and shrunken.)
 I knew him well. A fellow of infinite jest,
 Infinite hope—and infinite zest !
 Where were our guides? They had caught some
 uplift cackle ;
 Aaron and Moses had joined the Oxford Group.
 They took up the Nazi Moloch's tabernacle,
 They followed through night a smirking and social
 star.
 Day swooned on day, drugged with the all-
 drowsing sun :
 Night was a vigil set for the *Khamsin's* blast.
 High in the glaze-brimmed vault the vultures' vans
 Shadowed our kestrel spirits that feared to rise,
 Till dusk came leaden and dull,
 Lit with the dead men's stare—the desert lilith's
 glare—

And our bodies flung down, like the drought-struck
flowers that droop.

Yet even those hours have run.

We have come to some end at last.

We have come to some end. Only remain

Rock-ambush: masked pitfall: the climb

Hand over hand:

Cliff and bastion manned

By an unseen foe:

The grapple in darkness, the strain:

The trudge over treeless plateau

Swept by the icewind, clogged with the muffling snow.

Then the steep ways down, where afar

Through jungle and swamp, labyrinthine brake,

Plunging, a trampled tormented green snake,

In arrowy swift race

The Descender is hurled

To a lifeless lake,

A dead world.

There will be check, will be thrust,

Amid rushes that shake, over reedmats that quake:

Ford-ambush and fight

In the brambles, the asp-holes, the cobra-thickets:

On our hips, at our throat,

The Rivergod's wrestle and clutch, his swelled hood,

Lightning stroke of his fang.

Then toil and stiff push through the plain,

Step in step with the dust:

Cloaked burrow, thorn pampas, humped tussock,
lumped clod:

And again

Armed wadi: hill-ambush: upward battle and plod.

At the end we shall doubtless find

New Aarons, new golden calves to dance to,

New rackets, new jazz tunes to prance to,

New sorts of publicist, glamour girl, go-getter.
But we say
The rackets will somehow be different, the impostors
 a fresh kind.
We shall not get back our dead or the lost years,
God will not wipe away all tears,
But the Baalim of snowfield, stark height,
The Baalim of underground streams,
Will be Baalim who bring us new dreams,
They will grant us respite
From dry bones and mirage and sleek sand.
So we say they are good.
That even these famine-crazed lions which range
From their dens sunk in Jordan's green Pride
To prowl on the pilgrim-track, haunt the hillside,
Are in some wise better—yes, better—
Than hyenas that slunk round our pickets.
There will surely be difference, be change !
Not to anything specially grand
Or to much of much note,
Something rich and strange,
But a change;
Yes, a change, anyway !
So we thank God and say
We have done with the dead time,
We have come to the end of The Waste Land.
Of the years which were sand sand sand,
And still sand.

By the waters of Babylon,
By Isis and Thames,
By Hudson and Tigris and Ganges,
By Tiber and Seine,
I Ezra the Scribe
Put up ink-horn and stile:
And I wandered.

It was noon and no man had hired them:
High market and no man desired them.
So I wandered

And saw

The Son of Man stand
In the crowd at the pithead: his eyes
Dragged my face, as I passed him, for news.

He was laid off: disbanded:
Remanded.
He waited in wards:
He hung about boards:
I saw in his hand
The unopened telegram flutter.

The winter's keen flaw
Thrust a knife in his bones:
And hunger and dread
Twirled a dart at each nerve.

¹ This and the next five pieces are from the long poem *Anno Domini*, in the volume entitled *New Recessional*.

His place was in queues :
His name mud,
His life's pattern
Was move on and trudge.
His wife was a slattern,
His daughter
A drudge.

He was brought up in droves : as he stood
At attention he shook ; at a nod,
As a sheep to the slaughter
From court unto firing squad
Led,
He went to his rest,
His trade union card pinned to his breast.

Plague-festered, God-smitten,
He crawled on splayed limbs and begged food.
He salaamed : he broke stones
In famine : I doled him relief.
On the desert they tossed him and squandered.

He trembled, dissembled,
Was craven ;
He marched in chained file.
On his palms was engraven
The stigma of tribe—
It was chattel and wastrel and thief.
On his vesture and thigh this was written :
Cannon fodder and labour reserve.

He was sick and infirm :
His life came to its term.
Drink-sodden he stooped to the gutter
For cigarette ends.

I saw his lips mutter :
He walked without friends.

WHEN you saw Paris compassed about with armies,
 When the flames ascended
 Of a mighty kingdom's burning,
 The cry arose of a mighty nation's dying,
 The dolour deepened of a maddened people flying
 Down ways death dogged and clogged and bogged
 with slaughter,
 Eyes emptied of all prayer
 Sped by nor cast one glance
 At the broken calvary, the crucifix untended,
 The votive garlands shrivelled, the candles sputtered
 out:
 At the helpless Son of Man,
 Before whose bullet-splintered countenance
 The apollyons spread their wings,
 Rejoicing spread their dragon wings and sprawled
 and diced
 For the seamless robe unpriced,
 In the Place of a Skull called France.
 When you saw Paris compassed about with armies,
 Did the mind remember?

The spring failed then—in the hour of her returning:
 The lilies drooped in the Valley of Humiliation,
 Where the shepherd lad his pipe laid aside,
 And the herb called heartsease withered that he wore.
 Men went no more, no more,
 To the woods, for the laurels were cut
 (The prophet laurel fallen, and to earth
 Fallen the glorious dwelling—silent the babbling water).

The paths to the chalet of the shepherdess were shut:
The fountains of the nymphs were choked and dried:
And the Shepherd maid who wept
And had great pity for her realm of France—
Men said that Joan, and Christ
And his Apostles slept.

IN the Guildhall of Babylon was a Feast.
We brought out our vessels of gold,
 Gifts of the Furies and Pities, sack of a thousand cities,
 Spoil of dead empires our fathers had beaten down.
 Lion-clawed and bull-bodied our winged gods
 Stood ranged and spaced round the hall.
 Bel and Asshur stared from their stone eyes.

We drank wine and praised our gods of gold.

‘Your Majesties !
 ‘My Lords ! ladies and gentlemen ! Pray silence !’

In that same hour the fingers of a hand
 Came forth and wrote by the gilt candlesticks,
 On the polished whiteness, against the flickering
 brightness,
 Like a crab that crawls on snow, limping sinister slow,
 Blackly clearly etched.
 There was no more need to call for silence.

We sent then for a man they had not invited
 (Not that he had been slighted
 But his name was not on the Chamberlain’s list).
 A scholar and author of sorts,
 He was known to take some interest in politics,
 Had foretold (so they said) things which had come
 to pass
 (He took no credit for this—as the haulm ends in grain,
 Even so, he remarked, events in their causes showed
 plain).
 The late King had been impressed
 (Like so many, he took considerable stock in astrology)
 And (just before he became such an ass)

Had gone so far as to send his name for election
To the Susa Athenaeum (the Committee of Selection
Turned it down, the day His Majesty put himself out
to grass).

The fellow was brought in now. He proved nothing
much to look at;

He was small and had the stooped shoulders of a
student.

I remember, his trousers were frayed at the knees,
His garments were decent but old.

He did not seem interested in our gods of gold
Or even the portraits of peers on the wall,
But said he could interpret the writing.

It was grisly and exciting !

I am bound to admit that he left one a sense of unease !
But a man who traffics in eagles and he-goats and
dragons,

With Gabriel and Michael and beings with wings,
And in general with suchlike fabulous things,
Who mixes theology zoology
Ornithology

Sees the world in a red light.

So we passed round the flagons.

Darius the braggart we knew

Was camped at the gates, he had battered
A slim gap somewhere ; he planned fresh assault,
this was true.

But against such resources as ours ?

We should break it !

We agreed that the city could take it.

Our own and our Allies' great powers
Would bring him to wreck !

We should muddle through

As we always do,

We should win the one battle that mattered

And closed the campaign.
So we raised our champagne,
Clinked glasses and cheered when they robed him in
purple.

We stood when the King's shaking hands
Hung a gold chain on his neck
And, quaking and fumbling,
Pinned on his breast
The Order of the Babylonian Empire.
We clapped when our monarch's commands
Bade the Herald proclaim this man our Third Ruler.
I was near, so I saw the whole show.

The man did not appear to be listening !
Or was listening as if he heard
A sound of foundations crumbling, of hovel and
palace and ziggurat tumbling.
As a mule when it is saddled, he submitted
indifferently;
In his eyes was a look ironic, his lips moved to
himself.
*'This night
Shall Belshazzar the Chaldean be slain !
And—this chain?'*

He fingered it as though it were made of cheap glass.

W^HE^RE the carcass lay,
Grim and gay

There were the newshawks gathered together—
Our Ace Reporter: our lady of wealth and charm
and address.

They were in the right hotel.

They were there till the bursting of foul weather,
They were there for the breaking of the stress.

There they chummed with the right people,
There met Gladys Maureen Gwen and Tess,
There ran into Jumbo Fruity Jim,
Into Tiger Tiny Beaky Bob and Tim.

As the thunders muttered,
As the wisecracks spluttered,
As it neared the hour of zero
Heroine and hero

Hung above the sliding rim,
Watched the lava boss and swell;
Watched for me and you
The nilometers of Hell.

Then went back with doubled zest,
Back to Jumbo Fruity and the rest,
Back to Beaky Maureen Gladys Gwen and Bob.

They had talked with Adolf Hermann Himmller Hess,
With the Duce and Ciano: they had peered in Stalin's
brain:

Over cocktails Edda told them all her mind.
They had found the things they ought to find.

They were very very lucky!
They were nearly left behind.

But they caught by special favour the last train.
But they joined their frantic antic friends again,
Joined their telephoning friends again !
With the last of the last petrol,
In the last car to get through,
Past the trudging drudging mob,
High-packed prams, cats, parrots, dogs, despairing faces
(Just like going to The Races !),
Spun excited and were last to board the boat.
They were last to board the boat !
Then they wrote their thrilling 'sagas'—
And we knew !

They were stern to Europe's folly :
Just but not indulgent critics : grim
(Yet rather jolly !),
They allowed,
Though a saddening maddening snob,
Far from democratic
(Very far from democratic,
Casual shiftless drifting planless dumb erratic),
Yet the Englishman is best
Of a most disheartening crowd ;
That his Isle guards Freedom's moat.
London took it ! She was plucky !

(Then gay wings shook out with a will !
Rumour whispered a new kill.)

They were gallant ! they were swell !
Did a first-class job,
Served us faithfully and well.

Yes. They did us very well.

Who saw England once as through his eyes
Who fashioned *Thyrsis*—high midsummer's
pride
Of sun-flushed borders : dingle and loved hillside :
Orchis fritillary cowslip : brambles dim
Mist-garlanded—now see that landscape swim
Into dusk ages, with the eyes of him
Whose hand is on the bomb-switch must perceive
Each moon new-mounted, dawn, and treacherous eve.
Yon mountain is a seamark, his tall state
A finger that betrays the crouching town.
Broad fallow, level down,
Turn traitors to our peace : the chalk-limned
Horses,
The Ancient Man, stars in their steadfast courses,
Flash signals ! And this brook, whose waters flow
To push the wheel and rock the mill-pond's freight
Of sleepy lilies, beckons in the foe
To wreck the hamlet it beguiled to rise.

I

IN the Wilderness a Cry ! The silence stirs.
 Over smouldering kingdoms, gutted cities,
 As in the Beginning Comes the Word.
 Comfort ye my people !
 Bid them now forget !
 Only let
 The mind recall
 (Heart, remember !) how they strewed our passion's
 path with flowers,
 Chivalrous in shadow of the darkening hours,
 Hellas the forsaken !
 Hellas by the Spoiler doomed and overtaken !

'I was from Melbourne : under Olympus cold
 They made my grave amid the heath and fern.'
 'I was from Auckland : in the crimson brakes
 Of oleander, under Cretan Ida,
 Death struck.' 'On lilyed slopes of asphodel,
 Where the green waters of Litani race
 Through myrtle copse and styrax thicket I fell,
 Far from my Ebbw Vale.' 'Far from Clydesdale,
 In the narrow seas I died.'

II

In the stillness, where the firs
 Range in starkness, rigid darkness ;
 By the endless reedbeds, on the reddening plain
 Where through blackening cornscape once of old
 the Invader came,
 Beside his piled-up cart again
 The peasant thrusts fire's sickle into his ripened grain :

Mansion minaret and hovel fall
Tumbled in flame.
Dnieper's strong sinews like a steed unharnessed leap,
His plunging waters sweep
Seaward the labouring years,
Years that were freighted low with toil and dreams,
Years now the driftwood of his hurrying streams !

III

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light !
In the valley of glimmering bones close watchers have
caught
The glitter of movement, the murmur and shudder of
breath.
In Galilee of the Gentiles, Illinois of the Isolation :
In Oxford the islanded kremlin, shut in
Amid whisper of winds that stroke alder and willow,
Lapped round with harsh din
Of the clanking and changing of gears
And sleek swirling race on full throttle, smooth tyre ;
On the islanded upholstered mind
The dayspring is breaking !
On the cigarette ashends, *New Yorker*, teatray
That waits the awaking, slow yawn and drugged shaking
Of head that lies permed on the pillow :
On the clubs where they gossip and doze,
Where stout buttocks lounge deep
In caress and soft clasp of sunk chairs,
Under glaze of sham eyes, sham forest of antler and pelt,
Sham gusto of Saxon, bogus ardour of Celt :
Where Heavy and Light Brigades ride
And Dervishes rush on the maxims and squares,
And Buller and White
Or Wilson and Inglis (God knows !
But grand men who played well for their side !),

While their horses most patiently pose,
The dutiful dead drawn apart from their feet,
After Delhi or Ladysmith meet !

Upon those
Who sat in the region and shadow of death,
The dead places, dead faces,
On these has light shone !

WHEN mind above
 Dim sea of consciousness
 Dawned, speech I heard :
 That Thou wast Love—
 Power—Righteousness—
 The Undying Word
 Uttering Itself unceasingly—the Rock
 Of Ages, set in Being's fluctuant stream.
 And in my own life, I confess,
 That (more or less)
 This faith looked fact.
 But then, I am not proud, sir—do not deem
 My merits great—nor dare myself esteem
 As worthier than the countless crowd whose days
 Are such that Thou shalt never have my praise !
 I have thought much of these :
 Nearing the end of this my pilgrimage,
 I say I find
 Surety beyond all doubt, that Thou art Mind—
 Mind certainly—this I admit,
 Yet get small good of it.
 Mind strong but evil, bent to vex
 Our poor tribe so, that needlessly we rage
 With thoughts from out some devil's mind unpacked !
 Making this world, Thou didst not care to save
 The half-caste or the negro or the slave !
 But some hast placed in ease,
 As king or noble, swaying by right divine ;
 As Roman, Nordic, Aryan, massing earth
 With wrong and anguish stark—this was Thy plan !
 Others Thou hast sent forth with blot of birth,
 Or pigmented awry and marked for pain.
 Cold as the moon, Thou didst on Laurian mine
 Or latifundian kennel or lynching pyre

Or martyr's stake look down, while prayer proved
vain.

Thou hast no justice, sir; wert Thou a man,
This would I say. The laws which Thou hast made
Work in thick cloud; the stricken knows not why
He is stricken, nor what debt by death is paid.
Yet is my mind so foolish, that I feel
That for some sake not mine I dare not bow
To wrong Thou hast enthroned—and day and night
Falls on my life, on all I do, think, write,
Shadow of some Power that watches. Is it Thou?

FRIEND, who spake his name?
 F That name for many a day
 I had not heard !
 Going my listless way
 Unpanged, unstirred,
 Almost I had forgot
 The sleeping air
 Nourished a fire so hot—
 Almost was unaware
 My own heart's secret lair
 Hid close so fierce a pain,
 That died to spring again !
 Strange that a spoken word
 Should kill the years' long peace !
 Light syllables that fell
 And vanished with their birth,
 Light-riding keels that scarce
 Furrowed the silent air !

Heart ! when the citadel
 Drowsed, and the sentinel
 Dallied with idle dreams,
 No voice or tread I caught
 Of foes that filled the plain—
 Of sleep was all my thought !
 I am shut round, it seems !
 Who fired that random shot
 Whereby the night became
 (Night that was drugged with dreams)
 Thunder and sheeted flame ?

Who was it spake that Name ?

I

BEYOND the harbour drift
And pace far out of sight
Impatient tides that lift
Against the fire-hung night—

Against the thunder-glow
Of stars that curb their hate
(Those glimmering wastes below
Must watch and float and wait).

There is a fierce wind stalks
Athirst and gripped to slay—
There is a dim moon walks
Loiteringly astray.

II

She wanders till the morn
Shall drive her weakness hence;
The prowling waters scorn
Her gracious impotence.

But still the impartial stars
Thrust back that raging crew,
Who may not pass their bars
Before their season due;

Who plunge and peer and roar,
And sullen wait the hour
The wind shall burst my door
And toss me to their power.

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